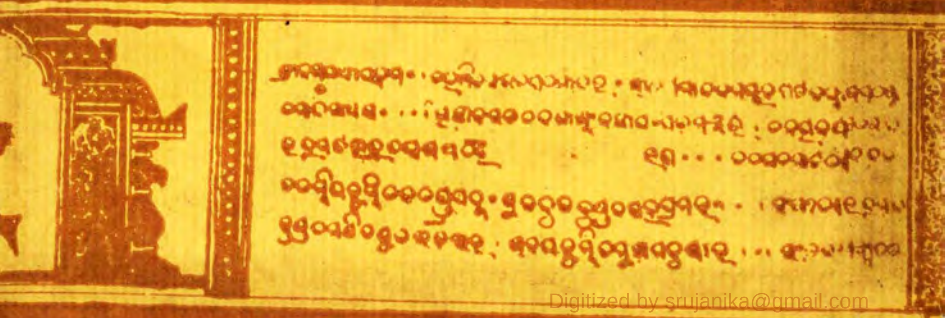
A Glimpse into Oriya Literature



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A GLIMPSE INTO ORIYA LITERATURE

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A GLIMPSE INTO ORIYA LITERATURE

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The Orissa Sahitya Akademi which started in the year 1957 is celebrating its Silver Jubilee function. On this august occasion the Akademi has made a modest attempt to have a glimpse into the Oriya literature, its rich antiquity, vivacity, dynamism and promise The result is the present book "A glimpse into Oriya Literature". We are extremely happy that this book is being released appropriately on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee celebrations of the Akademi.

A glimpse, in common parlance, is a faint and transient appearance; a momentary and cursory view. Any glimpse into a process has of necessity, to be circumscribed by these limitations. The present book "A Glimpse into Oriya Literature" has, to a large extent, succeeded to circumvent these limitations in the adroit hands of Chitta Ranjan Das, the author of the book, who is an erudite scholar of interdisciplinary studies. The book does not look only to the past in its pristine glory but also makes an attempt to portray the ingress of the past into the present in all its dynamism and promise. In this sense, it is not only a still projection or a cross-section of events and trends in any particular epoch or period in the literary history of Orissa, but a tale of the promises and potentialities of that particular epoch in its relation to contemporary trends and events.

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Books on Oriya literature in English language are few and far between. This book will fill up a long felt need in this area and we have no doubt that this book will be of interest not only to the e'lite, both inside and outside the State, but also to the lay.

18. 12. 82 — Rai Charana Das

Museum Buildings — Secretary,

Bhubaneswar—751014. — Orissa Sahitya Akademi.

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A PREFACE

A history of literature is not really a history. Neither does it intend to give anything final as a conclusion. It is rather a story which tends to become more intimate and intriguing as one goes deeper into it. And what is more, as in any other area of love and real involvement, there is so much of the personal stances to be reckoned with and taken care of.

The history of Oriya literature is a dialogue which is about a thousand years old. This dialogue has taken place upon a background which is dimensionally as old as man and culture in India. Hence, to write the story again is to share in that dialogue and also to throw out a few propositions with a certain perspective, which in its turn, will invite yet more sharing. There should be no other major inspiration behind writing a history of any literature.

I am grateful to the Orissa Sahitya Akademi for having given me the opportunity to prepare this monograph. The monograph should evoke more questions and occasion a thinking with wider perspectives.

Cuttack

Janmāstami, 1982 **Chitta Ranjan Das**

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CHAPTER I

IN THE BEGINNING

In the beginning are the people. The people have a corporate life. This corporate life in history has always preceded what is now known and celebrated as individual life. People have thus lived in society before they have really lived as individuals. Every society has always had a culture of its own, built upon a functional structure. Culture has always inspired the creator in man while it has also striven to provide the necessary succour for the very material existence of man. Relationships in a particular society have been healthy or unhealthy according as these two functions of culture have been able to exist in harmony with each other, as far as a society has developed appropriately to mean all individuals and as far as some individuals in it have not thought themselves to be 'more equal than others and have on the other hand normally bound themselves in a sense of commitment with the whole which sustains them. Thus, the fully functioning person in any human society has been in the long run identified as Homo concors, or man capable of feeling in harmony with himself and with others. Whatever may have been the

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explanations, mere *Homo sapiens* and *Homo faber* have not proved to be enough.

In the beginning were the people. They lived their lives, always in relationships with one another. They thought, they worked, they manufactured and they also created. They shared their creations and ideas. They grew as they shared. This process of sharing gave them a language which evolved into a definite shape as the people themselves evolved. A language was spoken pretty long before it came to be written down and recorded. All peoples had a literature before the languages could be written down. Thus everywhere, an oral tradition preceded the so-called literary tradition. There was a language before *Pundits* could weave out a grammar and a syntactic separate idiom and indentity around it. Likewise, there was also a literature, quite a rich heritage of it, before some people adroitly came to call it their own. History of literature will reveal that it was only very lately that people became sentimental about what they called their own language and literature, feigned as if they possessed them, loved to hold them up against other people's languages and literatures. That gave them a sense of glaze and in the long run, the vogue was to identify the whole gamut of literary creation in terms of what they came to look upon as a national literature.

ORIYA LITERATURE

The story of Oriya literature is primarily a story of literature, a story of producing and sharing in a field

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of activity which is literary and which is creative. Oriya literature is definitely a part of the great tradition that Indian literature is, and with that qualification, can only be treated as a litttle tradition. As any other regional literary tradition in India, of course, Oriya literature does have its special nuances and props, its special curves of excellence and lag in view of the peculiar inducements of a situation that obtained here from time to time Oriya literature is that mass of literature which has grown up and come to be in Orissa, because of the peculiar nature of the interplay of forces, literary and otherwise, in a particular slice of territory called Orissa. And to start with straight, Orissa has not been a stable concept even territorially considered. What is to-day known and governed as Orissa is of a very recent origin. Orissa became a separate province only as late as 1936, when the major indentifiable Oriya-speaking tracts were put together to form one administrative unit, then called a province. The very term Orissa was one given to a part of this region by the Moguls, to the coastal sarkars, on which they had established a hegemony beginning with the reign of Akbar, while the other tracts were lying apart and being ruled by other powers. The very name Orissa or Oḍis'ā as it is called in the land itself has been inferred to have been derived from what was known as Ūdraḍes'a right during the pre-Aryan times. Some Tibetan texts of the Tantric-Buddhistic lore have used the term Ottivis ā to mean what is now territorially modern Orissa and in all probability the latter is a derivation from the former. Ūdra, denoting the name of a people and a language, is found in several ancient texts of India, including the

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Mahābhārata and Bharatamūni's Nātyas'āstra. A peasant community inhabiting mainly the central regions of Orissa is still called the *Oda* community, that claims itself to be the oldest on the soil in this region. Nevertheless, it has to be submitted that what went under the name of Ūdradēśa was never the whole of Orissa as the latter is known to-day. Denoting the other regions were Kos'aḷa, Ūtkaḷa and Kaḷinga. These were separate entities and more often than not ones that fought with one another. The boundaries and the bulks used to change according to conquests and empires being made and unmade all the time, compelling people frequently to change their identities and allegiances. It was surely an age when people did not matter at all. It could not be otherwise.

Kośaḷa in this context was known as Dakshiṇa Kos'aḷa, most probably a southern extension of the comparatively more familiarly known Kośaḷa of the Ganges basin in the north. Most probably in course of time the tail became separate from the main whole because of a territorial feud and became an entity for itself. This unit of a kingdom was in constant hostility with the sister kingdoms of Ūtkaḷa and Kaḷinga adjoining it, had made more than one intrusions by conquest till it was finally absorbed into the Ganga empire by the Choḷas in the 11th century A D. Even to-day, when Orissa has been governed now for quite more than a generation as one entity, there are several people in the Kos'aḷa counterpart of the State who take a special pride and pleasure to be reckoned as inhabitants of Kos'aḷa though simultaneously being called inhabitants

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of Orissa. Interestingly enough, such people mainly constitute those who are educated and hence ought to know.

The southern part of Orissa was known in history as Kaḷinga. It seems that in earlier times there were several tribes called the Kaḷingas and subsequently they were brought under a common sway by one who therefore proudly proclaimed himself as Sakaḷakaḷingādhipati. The Choḷas who had surged northwards from Karnataka towards the close of the first millenium had already a kingdom established as Kaḷinga with its headquarters at Mūkhalingam and then annexed the north-lying Ūtkaḷ to it. They also later took Kośaḷa by conquest. That was perhaps for the first time in history that our tract under review got the semblance of a single whole. The northern region was Ūtkaḷa, which should be a derivation of Ūtkaḷiga meaning upper Kaḷinga. It may be noted that when king Ashoka had his Orissa expedition in the 3rd century B. C. it was in all likelihood Ūtkaḷinga that he was dealing with.

In between these three major names that denote a broad regional division which should describe Orissa of the bygone times, there were many others, pointing out to dynasties and areas which they ruled. A few of these are the Mātharas, tbe Mūrūndas, Saiḷodbhabas, the Bhaūmakaras the Somavanmsis or the Somakuḷis, so on and so forth. Each of these had existed, moved and they had their being at a particular time forming a regional kingdom which gave in to others rather so frequently that it is very difficult for a

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historian to pin them into a whole, linking them together in a coherent sequence. More evidences have yet to be available and till then at least, one has to be content with the available regional descriptions.

Orissa was conquered by the Muslims in 1568. But this Orissa was only the coastal strip to the east, meaning only not more than three districts. A major portion of what constitutes political Orissa to-day was outside the pale and was ruled piecemeal by feudatory chiefs some of whom were the unillustrious remnants of the erstwhile *Gajapati* royal line who had been ruling the land after the Gangas, and some others of those again who had come from outside Orissa and taken possession of the respecive units by mainforce after having killed the native chiefs. After the Muslims came the Marathas. The latter were already in their phase of wane when they came to Orissa. They were rather plunderers than real rulers and were more after the gains of a plunder after they had overrun a tract. The British followed the Marathas in 1803 and yet, for reasons prompted by the interests of empire-keeping, they had two kinds of government :—the districts which were directly under the British administration and the as many as twenty-six feudatory states ruled by the *Rajahs*, who ruled as vassals and yet had the impression that they were really *Rajahs*. Thus feudalism and imperialism continued side by side right up to 1947, thus very tacitly building up a regional imbalance that persists even after decades of political freedom These *Rajahs*. had to pay a certain sum to the crown mutually agreed upon, but could exact as much as they could from their subjects. As a result, a sort of darkness prevailed

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over about half of Orissa and the nineteenth as well as the twentieth century contact of the land with modern enlightenment and the awakening that came in its wake did not touch even the peripheries there. Both socially and politically, the chasm continues to a very great extent even to-day, and it has surely its repercussion in the field of literature also. The few people who had migrated from the directly governed coastal areas to these feudatory states, prevailed upon the *Rajahs* and got themselves settled there, were more on the side of the *Rajahs* than of the people and thus added to the exploitation and misery. The great divide thus created still exists and serves as a hurdle to all real assimilation.

The three coastal districts of British Orissa—Puri, Cuttack and Balasore—were part of Bengal when the British had won these from the Marathas. For some time they were also governed as a part of Bihar. The Sambalpur tract was with Madhya Pradesh as late as the first decade of this century. The two southern districts of Ganjam and Koraput were in the-then Madras Presidency, till the lot came to be formed into a separate province in 1936. The feudatory states were a world remote and apart till their merger into the State of Orissa after 1947. This will indicate that Orissa has not been the territorial whole as is often supposed and this has always had its effect on the cultural evolution of the region. Social and economic factors always tend to affect the literature of a particular people and in Orissa the distances have always remained powerful enough to be a factor.

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ORIYA LANGUAGE,
—THE UNITING FORCE.

Thus territory is not the really important variable which gives. Oriya Literature its *raison d'e'tre.* Oriya language has a much better claim to be that variable. Though territorially Orissa has meant different things at different times, the real uniting force has been the Oriya language. This language, in spite of the local variations in forms of dialects from time to time, has remained the main inspiring factor behind the development of a literature. Though under different rules and rulers, changing lot with the change of masters, the bulk of the Oriya-speaking people have remained a contiguous whole and that whole has given rise to a literature through the centuries, which has a continuity and a homogeneity. It is not of course claimed that Oriya language has always been the same right from the very beginning. In fact there is no abrupt and total beginning, there has been only an evolutionary process. Orissa, because of its special geographical position has been specially open to that process and to the many combinations and assimilations which that process always connotes. Orissa is situated right between on the passage from the north to the south, also vice versa and thus has been exposed to all the advantages and hazards of being a passsage and to some extent a bridge. Even a look at the Oriya script will tell a lay observer that it bears the mark of both Dravidian and Indo-Aryan scripts.

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Racially, Orissa has been the meeting ground of four main strands of races, the Negrito, the Austric, the Dravidian and the Aryan. The Negritoes were the very first inhabitants and then came the Austrics or the Niṣādas as they have been called in the Indian texts. The very fact that about a quarter of the entire population of Orissa to-day belongs to these two stains is enough testimony to the premise that much of what happens in the total life-sphere in Orissa has very much of the impress of these two races. In Orissa as all over India so much of the pre-historic Austric life, world-view and culture have been appropriated into the so-called Aryan culture. Most of our deities worshipped, the folk deities as well as the later sanskritized ones have been originally Austric innovations. Most of our observances are vestiges, sophisticated vestiges though, of those ages. The Śabaras have been acknowledged to be one of the very oldest tribes that inhabited India and a very large portion of the Ādivāsi population in Orissa to-day happens to be Śabara Some scholars think that even the words Kaḷinga, Ūtkaḷa and the like have been originally Austric words. Thus we may assume, the Austrics were the first inhabitants of this land after the very first primeval Negritoes After them the Drāvidas came to Orissa from the south and south-west. This migration seems to have taken place by about the close of the pre-Christian era. After these, have come the Aryans, in two hordes, one through the Rāḍhadēśa in the north-east and the other through Mahākośaḷa in the north-west.

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It must have been anything but easy for the Aryans to enter the Orissan tract and settle down there. It seems, there has been quite a bit of resistance on the part of the native inhabitants against such an intrusion. This may be one of the reasons why Kaḷinga, along with *Anga* and *Banga* has been denounced as an inferior sort of country defiled by the impure quality of the breed of people who lived there. Even as late as the 6th century B. C., Aryans were advised not to go in for settling down in Kaḷinga and those who were the original inhabitants there were condemned as fallen and degenerate. The great law-giver *Manu* of the 2nd century B. C. goes to mention that a journey to Kaḷinga was permissible only for purposes of a pilgrimage and any violation of the rule required an act of repurification and expiation after one had come back from there.

The same is the story of the Oriya language in the early days. We have terms as Ūdrabhāsā, Odrabhāṣā and Audri to indicate that a language having some identity of its own prevailed in this part of the country. In the Matsya Pūrāna, Udradēśa has been described as a land of the Mḷēchhas. Accordingly the language then ought to have been in the category of the Mḷēchha languages. The Mḷēchhabhāsa, in the case of Orissa of those times should mean the language of the Śabaras and in terms of the genre, of the Austrics. This was the base upon which the subsequent combinations and evolutions have taken place. The Dravidian speech has surely influenced it from the South. The local speech of South Orissa shows how it has taken into itself very much of the elements of the

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Dravidian language style and thus has formed into a distinct dialect, called *Dakshini Odiā* The Aryan tongues then being spoken in Magadha and Mahākośaḷa have come along with the Aryans who came to Orissa and thus caused an Aryanization To be more precise, these have been the Māgadhi and Mahākośaḷi Apabhramśas, dialects of the scriptural Sanskrit. Bharatamūni of the first century after Christ has attributed to this amalgam the status of a bibhāṣā. The name he has given to it is Oudri or Ūdrabhāsā. For the Sanskrit scholars, Oudri has remained a bibhāṣa till as late as the 16th century. It will mean that the *pundits* of Orissa, the celebrators of Sanskrit as the only bhāsā have taken about fifteen hundred years to recognize the real language of the people and the land as a language It will be evident however through the later chapters that by that time this language, Oriya, had already come much of age and had become a worthy vehicle of a high level of literature. But the Sanskrit scholars did not give it an appropriate status. Things had to wait till the 16th century when Mārkandēya Kabindra who flourished in Orissa gave Oriya or Oudi as he really preferred to call it, the status of a bhāṣā, or a full-fledged language. One is surprised to observe that even Biśwanātha Mahāpātrā of the Sāhitya Darpaṇa fame who came quite a few centuries earlier and must have used Oudri at home in day to day parlance did not think the question had a relevance According to Mārkande'ya Kabindra Oudri had evolved out of a combination of words spoken in the tracts of Sūrasēna and Ūdra with the Śābari tongue. It has been supposed that the language used in the

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Ashokan stone edicts at Dhauligiri and also that used in the Hātikūmphā inscription of Khāravēla on the Kūmāri hill were not the tongues spoken in the land itself during the two kings' respective times. Nevertheless the land did have a language of its own. It was a part of the very life of the people who then inhabited the land. It was thus a living language, one that was being evolved gradually in spite of the condemnations and rejections of the court and by the learned scholars.

To sum up, Oriya as a language has its very first base in the Śābari or the Austric language, has been nourished to subsequent shapes and forms by its contact with the Drāvidiān speech, enriched with the elements of Māgadhi and Saūrase'ni. Then has come Sanskrit as such. Orissa has to her credit many scholars of repute who have contributed commendably to Sanskrit learning and literature. With the Moguls and the Muslims, we have had influences from Arabic, Persian and Urdu. And lastly there has been the impact of the European languages, predominantly of English. Modern Oriya, then, or the medium of Oriya literature to-day is thus a product which has to be grateful to so many sources. The exposures and contaminations have always been to its advantage. The contaminations do continue.

EVOLUTION OF THE ORIYA LANGUAGE

In the Mahāyāna Buddhist text 'Lalitavistaar', it is mentioned that Gautama Buddha was well-versed with no less than sixty-four languages. Some scholars have surmised Ūdri to be one of these languages. One does

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well to take these inferences with a grain of salt, because, the Mahāyāna attitude towards Buddha thought it quite reasonble to associate all the extraordinary qualities with one it wanted to establish as a god. A more correct hypothesis will perhaps be that, by the time '*Lalitavistara*' was written, Ūdrabhāṣā had come to be known in the eastern region of the country as a local variation of *prakrit.*

Oriya, as a language was very much in a formative state till about the end of the first millennium A.D. It was spoken much before it could claim anything written for itself as literature. There was no doubt an oral tradition and thus a literature also. Another very important point to be taken note of is that because of the status given to Sanskrit in India by the e'lite powers that be and because of the sacrosant halo created around it for predominantly utilitarian reasons, the regional vernaculars were deemed below status to be treated with fairness. It was a collusion between the ruling Kshatriyas and the monopolizing Brahmins that kept the spoken language of all people including the Kshatriyas and the Brahmins relegated and denounced to an inferior status. To look down upon the common usage language in favour of the language of scriptures and ceremonies has been the Indian style almost through all the ages, and the dichotomy continues even till to-day, although in a different garb. A society faithfully basing itself on class and caste could not perhaps do anything else. As in the case of the society in India, there has been also in the field of literature a class of Brahmins who dominate.

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The attitude of looking at one's own language and literature as *my* language and *my* literature came much later after India had acquired the nationalistic way of looking at things. Collective egoes did not take much time to be formed, and thus tongues began to be looked upon as mother tongues. The sense of sentimentality that is often associated with an attitude like this has often stood very much in the way of an assessment of the regional literature as literature. The people and the society who have always been the real matrix for all development in literature have been lost sight of in the enthusiastic pull. The drive to sentimentalize has often made people one-eyed as it were and has persuaded them to forget the inevitable fact that creativity in literature and its expression does always have a social dimension. The excuse of nationalism has tended to make much of literary assessment very parochial and prejudiced, almost drastically dissociated from the whole that is Indian literature. One could always afford to be more critical, more full of a real love for truth and for creativity. Oriya literature should get our attention primarily because it is literature and should submit to an assessment on the basis of how totally it has reflected the respective ages from time to time and also how totally it has projected itself to us so that we confront our real challenges as adequately as possible.

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CHAPTER—II

THE BACKGROUND AS A PROP

The Gangas ruled Orissa for the longest time in history and for that matter also a major part of its territory at one stretch. After them came the Solārs, an indigenous line, the first three of which were powerful monarchs who made wide conquests and annexations, but unfortunately after whom the glory began to dwindle. The Gangas had come from the south and thus, seen in more than one perspective, their rule in Orissa was not very much more than an extension of the Choḷa empire. Choḷaganga Deva, the conqueror-founder of the Ganga dynasty has to his credit the honour of having rebuilt the great temple of Puri, the Jagannāth temple which, it is inferred, was there from the time of the *Somavamsis*. The Gangas were great builders of temples. The very famous temples at Bhubanēśwar and Konārk were also built during the Ganga regime. This, more than anything else, should suggest that there was since long a rich tradition of temple-building skill in Orissa and it had its most admirable unfolding and expression with the patronage of the Ganga monarchs. The Ganga king Narasimha Dēva, the builder of the Sun-temple at Konārka is said to be the first in his dynasty to have

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assumed the title of *Gajapati*, a tradition which continued unbroken by the following dynasty and is still donned by the existing heir of the royal line who resides at Puri as a representative symbol.

SOCIO-POLITICAL HISTORY

The records which give us some consistent history of the period are limited to the many inscriptions of gift deeds, made available on copper plates. It should not be forgotten that the facts of history these plates appear to provide, have been recorded by a king's order and thus must more often than not tend to glorify the king himself than to record a body of facts. The entire society at that time revolved round the king, who had absolute power not only on the people, but also on the gods. These gods changed status according to the loyalty of the kings towards them, and the whole bulk of people constituting a kingdom had to change the tenets of their worship accordingly The people in the arrangements of that society did not exist as people. The poets also had their very first allegiance to the king and modelled their genius at poetry-making accordingly. The *pundits* were always more on the side of the king than of knowledge which had made them into *pundits*. The people, the king's subjects, paid the taxes to make the king's adventures and also misadventures possible and lived completely reconciled to destiny, according to a law of *karma* that was e'lite India's privileged prerogative to keep the larger segment of ordinary people docile and unquestioning.

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It is known from a few copper plates of some Orissan kings that the Śudras or the lowly in society were the *Atabikas* or those who lived in the woods and bushes. These Śudras included those who dealt in animal flesh in the market, trapped birds and did fishing. But those who bought the meat and consumed them were not necessarily the low castes. The untouchables lived on the village outskirts at a convenient distance from the higher caste habitats. The whole higher society did depend on the former for the menial services, and the menials had to live in isolation, though not very far away, so that they could be easily available. The rich people lived mainly in the cities and as it has been described in a plate, the city almost glowed in white with the buildings they had built for themselves, It is said that Kalinga-nagara, the capital city of the Gangas, presented an illusion of the heavenly kingdoms and was a tremendously enjoyable place in all seasons of the year. The poor sections lived in the rural areas. The Oriya Mahābhārata, written during the rule of the Solars indicates at a place that the real tillers of land had no education worth the name. These lived as wage labourers on other's farmland. Most of the land in a village belonged to the higher castes and most of the hired labourers were from the low castes. There were perhaps the village councils, but the landless, agricultural labourers had no participation in them. They did not have right to play any part in the organizations of local government.

The kings made the conquests, ruled over the people and built temples. The people paid taxes. They were subject to all sorts of taxation. There was the

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tax on arable land. Besides, the share-croppers, i. e. the landless who cultivated other people's land to make a living by giving the latter a major share of the harvest, had also to pay a special tax. Salt was taxable commodity and there was a special officer appointed by the Gangas to look to it. The Gangas had in all probability got this idea of a tax on salt from the Choḷas who had this levy in Karnataka. There was a tax on plough heads, on fishing and hunting. Waterways, tanks and wells demanded a tax to be used. All the mango and mahūa trees in the village were the king's property. Dynasties changed and the people had to change their masters, but taxes continued. The masters were of the same kind always. The people in general were as poor as the kings were rich and ambitious. Poverty was the lot of most of the people as has traditionally ever remained even to our day. In the Jātaka stories of later Buddhism, we get the mention of several kingdoms and principalities, of which, it is said, Kaḷinga was the unfortunate land where rains were very uncertain and thus famines and scarcities were a perpetual experience. In times of abject scarcity, the Jātakas tell us, hungry people clustered in large numbers at the palace-gates of kings and ministers and begged for food. They had nothing else to depend upon for rain except the grace of gods.

There are anecdotes and evidences to assume that coastal Orissa had rich trade communications with Burma, Indonesia and Thailand. The great poet Kalidāsa has described the kingdom of Kaḷinga as "*Mahodadhipati*" or the ruler of the seas. Historians have been able to point out that the Mātharas and the

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Sailodbhavas of the 5th to 8th century Orissa had established colonies in the ocean islands. The Orissan style of sculpture also seems to have travelled beyond the seas and have an impact on the iconographic styles of Borobadur. Even the script of the plates recovered in Java are deciphered to be much similar to that obtained in the plates found in Orissa. There is enough evidence to believe that Kaḷinga was one of the lands of India that had trade links with the archipelago in the east. Trade with other countries, however, does not necessarily suggest an affluent and prosperous people, though it undoubtedly suggests a class that was affluent and prosperous and did carry on trade. Even to-day in Orissa as in the whole of India we have affluence and poverty living side by side.

A British observer in the nineteenth century is said to have once remarked that Orissa as a single tract of land happens to contain more temples than what the rest of India has in it The phenomenon seems to have surprised him very much. It has to be admitted though, that more temples would not always suggest that the people concerned are more religious and therefore more given to spiritual life. It simply suggests that Orissa had a rich tradition of temple buliding and the ruling chiefs from time to time did take full advantage of the available talents. In the ancient as well as medieval times, *cuius regio, eius religio* was the accepted style all over the civilized world India and Orissa for that matter can never be claimed to have remained exceptions to the rule. The kings were the dispensers of religion and thus proclaimed themselves as the very first worshippers.

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Instances will not be wanting to prove that the same was always the case in Orissa as long as the kings were the supreme dispensers. Kaḷinga became Buddhist with the Buddhist monarch's conquest of it In the first century B. C. came Meghabāhana Khārabēḷa who was a Jaina and the kingdom thus became Jaina. After him there was a revival of Buddhism for some time. The Mūrūndas, when their turn came patronized Jainism. The Māthara kings of northern Kaḷinga have described themselves as *Paramabhagabata* and *Paramadaibata* in the gift-plates they have left after them, meaning that they were Vishu-worshippers. The Śailodbhavas were Shiva-worshippers and hence they thought they were *Paramamahe'swaras* and made themselves known accordingly. The Bhaūmakaras were Buddha-worshippers and in the very fitness of things Buddhism became state religion in their time and the heads of state were celebrated as *Paramasaugatas*, *Paramatathagatas* in the plates they had ordered to be written.

Things become very conspicuous when we come to Choḷaganga Deva in the 11th century A. D He was the first king in the line. To start with, he was a Shaiva, but after coming in contact with the Vaishnava philosopher of the qualified monism school, he became a Vaishnava. It is very interesting to see that in 1084 in a plate issued by him, he describes himself as *Paramamaheshwara*. At a second stage in a plate issued in 1112, he is both *Paramamaheshwara* and *Paramavaishnava*, indicating he was still torn between the two loyalties, and lastly, by 1118, it seems he had

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firmly decided in favour of the latter and thus could do away with his first title *Paramamaheshwara.* It has been said by historians that before the Gangas, in the three places of worship in coastal Orissa—Puri, Bhūbaneśwara and Jajapura, there was a sense of mutual animosity between the respective worshippers and priests. It was only when the tracts were united under a single suzerainty with the Gangas becoming Sakaḷakaḷingādhipati that the monarchs could assume all the titles of Pūrūṣottama-pūtra, Dūrgā-pūtra and Rūdra-pūtra, thus ending the rifts between the worshippers of Vishnu, Shakti and Shiva.

THE LEGACY OF RELIGIONS

The history of religion in Orissa reads almost like a novel. The themes of this novel have been put to shape by the ruling chiefs of the land and also by the conquest-minded religious leaders who have come to this land from time to time. Warring orders have flourished, each striving and competing to get a royal patronage, each has gathered round itself a few *pundits* to say with scriptural evidence that only it was the most true. The common people of course have been always drawn to the fray, but they have been left at the very lowest level, unelevated and given to a few tenets of outward worship and ceremonial form. Scholars of religion who give almost all their intellectual vigour to finding out the origins of religions are still very much divided about how and when exactly the different ways-Shākta, Shaiva, Vaishnava and the like-had begun in India. How deep and how wide could the Sādhakas and

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worshippers of these ways could go in terms of realization and spiritual attainment has always remained beyond the reach of these scholars. But it becomes clear from their explorations that exclusive orders and sects have been formed after the particular formulations. Sects have given rise to further sects, as the *Gurus* have multiplied in number. Most of the gurus have shown more interest in forming sects of their own than in god-realization going along their own particular paths. And the common people have remained almost in the same ignorances and incapacities through the ages. Theologies have been contrived and they have given rise to hatred and exclusiveness. The kings have played the main role in the drama. By hating the enemy and in the enthusiasm of subduing him to a positon of inferiority, each religious sect has tried to excel out the other in becoming worldly-wise and profane. In India, at the great tradition level, Buddism has in the long run tried to look like Hinduism in order to be able to exist in the teeth of Hinduism. The same story has also been enacted in the little traditon that Orissa has always been It is said that during the Somakūḷi regime, hundreds of Buddhists have been done to death and Buddhist places of worship defiled Buddhist monks have been harassed and persecuted as an aftermath of Shri Shankarāchārya's polemic victories in Orissa. The Śhaivā King Saśanka who had come from Bengal and who has been glorified as the builder of the famous Shaiva temple at Bhūbanēśwar in the Sanskrit books of the sect is ascribed to have become instrumental in killing many people who were not Shaivas. A telling evidence of all this is the broken Buddhist pillar now

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being worshipped as a *Linga* in the Bhāskarēshwar temple at Bhūbanēśwar. At times, the kings of Orissa have presided over assemblies to decide the comparative superiority of sects and after a certain test, the triumphant sect has run amuck in its destruction of the vanquished rivals. At other times again, the king and the queen have apparently taken sides and all concerned have had more fun out of the atrocities.

There have also been attempts at an amalgamation. Since no one knows when, the five main deities of the Hindu pantheon have been worshipped by the simple folk with equal devotion. At Mahābināyaka, in the district of Cuttack, a one-piece stone representing all the five deities in one symbol is still the object of worship. The Simhanātha temple at Badāmbā on the bank of the river Mahanadi has all the three icons, of Vishnu, Śakti and Siva being worshipped even to-day. There are also other instances to illustrate the point. Even the deities at the Pūrūsottama Kshētra at Puri are said to stand for Vishnu, Siva and Shakti forming a triad within a single conception.

THE CULT OF JAGANNATH

The deities at Puri temple, and Jagannāth to be more particular, have been customarily acclaimed as the *Istadēvatā* of the entire people of Orissa. And one hears all sorts of stories which have got woven around them during the centuries Some of these stories form chapters in the sectarian Purāṅas. Jagannāth, both as a category of consciousness and as an institution has inspired so

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much in Oriya literature and occupied so much attention of so many poets and authors. To be sure, Jagannāth is, at its best, the concrete sum total of the link that joins the spiritual and religious great tradition of India as a whole and the spiritual and religious tradition of Orissa as a part of it. The Jagannāth kshētra is still the meeting place of the Indian people from all the corners of the country, and to some in Orissa, it is the very first thing Orissa can claim to have contributed to the great religious and spiritual heritage of India.

Jagannāth has appeared to be everything to everybody, and that too with equally viable justifications. There are reasons to believe that it is a deistic emblem of the three *Ratnas* of the Buddhist faith. Jagannāth is a very familiar name in the Tantras and some rituals even to-day performed in the temple do suggest a tantric influence. There are scholars who attribute the three deities installed in the Puri temple to be representing the three Jaina concepts of perfect knowledge, perfect conduct and perfect attitude. Everybody however seems to be unanimous about the fact that the origin of the Jagannāth worship is Austric. Jagannāth is said to have been worshipped by the Śabaras, and there are near mysterious stories about how the deity has been appropriated by the Aryanized people from the former. In fact, from a point of view, all the so-called Hindu deities have been evolutions, sophistications of Austric objects of worship and at a time have been usurped as it were from the less equipped and less sophisticated peoples

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who were worshipping them. It is known from a Sanskrit text of the fourteenth century that the deity which was later installed inside the temple at Bhubaneśwar was originally being worshipped, to start with, under a mango tree by the Śabaras In several temples in Orissa, Sabaras and Konds have been the traditional priests at what have been in the long run incorporated as Hindu temples with Hindu deities. Sūbhadrā, the female deity by the side of Jagannāth and believed to be His sister has been a gradual improvement upon the Austric deity Khambeśwari. Khambeśwari happens now to be a Hindu deity worshipped by the latter in several places in western Orissa. But whatever might have been the origins, and however some people of the Hindu fold may even to-day boast about a synthesis which has been made at the Puri temple between the Austric and Hindu worship, the fact remains that even to-day the Ādivāsis are not allowed entrance to the temple. Due to some reason, not yet explored, some Ādivāsi families are said to have been residing at Puri since about those early times, who have been entrusted in the temple authority structure to perform certain rituals at the Jagannāth temple. It should be enough to observe in this regard that the whole thing has been purely a symbolic act and even those favoured families are now, due to acculturation of the centuries, more Hindus and part of the Hindu eche'lon than Ādivāsis.

Shri Śankarāchārya had come to Puri when he was out traversing the four end-points of the country propounding his monistic doctrine and in the process

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bringing to bay the Buddhist scholars of his time, thus putting an end to Buddhistic institutions. He was followed by all the other stalwarts of Vedānta philosophy representing the various shades and labels. The list includes Rāmānūja, Nimbāditya, Mādhava and Ballābhācharya. All these scholars or their deputies have come to the seat of Jagannāth, in all probability more for the propagation of the doctrines and the ways espoused by them than for their adoration of the presiding deity being worshipped there. Through these presences and the warmth of interest these ought to have created, Puri came to become before long a seat for all confrontations between rival points of view. These rivalries often culminated in the eventual victories and defeats and in the eyes of the people, they appeared to be some what real proofs of the superiority of one sect over the other. Often the state was also involved; the Deity at the sacred temple being a property of His very first *Se'vaka*, the king of course had a stake in the prevailing weather round the temple. The scholars who won had also an access to the king's special favour. In this way, all these sectarian exponents could get a chance of introducing a few rituals of their respective sects into the routine of worship in the temple. As a result of all these intrusions and insertions, the whole paraphernalia thus became a hotch-potch at a grand scale. It is really bewildering and even frustrating to think how these very great religious thinkers of India could be content by introducing a few externalities of worship into the temple and could think that they had really served their purposes only by doing that. Each of these sects,

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formed after the schools, has now its own *math* at Puri and these *maths* function like islands without almost any line of communication with one another. A religious teacher and the message he has with him should never be content with anything less than a change happening in the heart of the people. The story of Hindu scholasticism and apostleship is replete with instances of the former.

Some students of the cult of Jagannātha take this for a synthesis. A synthesis is a special attiude of mutual relationship inspiring respect for one another and all the time emphasizing the essentials. A synthesis is never just an amalgam of externalities, and mutual rejection and a deep-seated bias are in no way its real style. A synthesis always inspires an elevation. The Jagannātha institution on the other hand has tended to inspire people to be more idolatrous than otherwise and has also made some people in Orissa arrogant with the thinking that because the temple happens to be in Orissa, the deity belongs specially to them and is a veritable part of their property. The consciousness that should pervade the real worshipper, because the deity he worships is the 'Lord of the whole universe' ought to liberate him of all narrowness and all sense of owning a deity. The latter attitude that characterizes most of the studies and assessments on Jagannātha is a result of regionalism which is just a degenerated form of exclusive nationalism. Once you have discovered an idol that is exclusively your own, you suddenly begin to find pleasure in owning him, extolling him as the highest and then go to sleep.

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This is the worst that can happen to an idol-worshipper who refuses to see beyond and see within.

Because of these many influences—Austric, Vedic, Tantric, Buddhistic, Jaina, Saiva, Sākta, Vaishnava and what not— the greatest advantage for Orissa has been the all-India nature of Puri as a place of pilgrimage. Thus Puri has been the window through which Orissa has looked out to the entire tradition that the country stands for and also a door through which the whole country has come in contact with Orissa. Wherever one goes in this country, people there surely know Lord Jagannātha and His great temple, without even knowing that it is situated in a state called Orissa. Most people, pilgrims as well as tourists, come to Orissa because of Jagnnātha and this is a thing of the highest significance. The entire institution has more than anything else played a great role in bringing about an inner sense of integration, cultural, national and the like, among all people concerned. Because of the institution, Orissa has come nearer to the rest of India and got a real opportunity to suggest to itself that it is a part of a larger whole.

The primitive mind is nearer to nature than what is called the modern mind. Nature to the former is always the Universal Nature, even though it is not conscious of it and experiences the latter as a concrete precsence. It is only as man became more and more tied to his sophistications that he came to possess things which were around him, including the things of worship.

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Thus the concept of a 'Lord of the whole universe' ought to have been a treasure with the primitive man, however crude may have been the form in which he nurtured it. Jagannāth, or Jagantā as the Sabaras have it in their own vocabulary meaning the 'Lord of the whole universe' should with greater justification be attributed to the Śabaras who originally worshipped it, as a fetish and a symbol. As it was taken away from them and installed as an Aryanized deity by an Aryan king, in the gradual process it lost much of its universality, because the people who now owned him as an object of worship were more individualistic and idolatrous in their attitude. From then on, Jagannāth as a deity became a possession directly under the wardship of a king. The kings who governed Orissa of course did not proclaim this right of possession in a direct sort of way. The kings have their own way of appropriating a thing, of possessing it by introjecting as it were and thus degenerating an inspiration to a mere institution. To king Anangabhima of the Ganga dynasty goes the credit of having proclaimed that Lord Jagannāth or Pūrūsottama was the real Lord who ruled Orissa and he was merely His son, His deputy ruling on his behalf. Kapile'ndra De'va, the founder of the Sūrya clan after the Gangas also had declared himself to be only a *se'vaka* of Lord Jagannātha. His son, Pūrūsottama Deva, who had ascended the throne by doing away with the real claimants is said to have made lavish donations of land and cash to Lord Jagannātha and as it were to get an approval from them for his usurpation, had fifteen villages with rent-free land created for the settlement of the Brahmins. In

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exchange, the Brahmins hailed him as rightful heir and glorified him with the title of *Nārayana-Amsābatāra*. All the Gajapati kings who succeeded, also had declared themselves as Lord Jagannātha's *Ādyase'vaka* or the very first servant. Most of them used the titles 'Pūrūsottama-putra' and 'Pūrūsottama-Barapūtra' after their names which meant that they were the sons and very first sons of the Lord but which, for all intents and purposes gave them the status of His heir and His possessor. When Caesar happens to identify himself with God, he more often than not tends to reduce the latter to the status of a prote'ge'. The real challenges are lost in the process and the age is condemned to remain beguiled.

JAGANNATHA AND ORIYA LITERATURE

Jagannāth has occupied a very large place in Oriya literature, both in poetry as well as in prose. Different authors have read different meanings in the total institution that Jagannātha came to represent in course of the centuries. We have hymns, *bhajans* and *jaṇānas* as these are called in Oriya in His praise. Jagannātha, in some specimens of Oriya poetry and with some cases of authorship has brought out the best in man, the best that can be possible as an expression about the relationship between God and man. The devotional poets have at times felt so intimate a proximity with their guardian deity that they have come forward with all sorts of complains and accusations for the fact of their having been condemned to a life of misery and poverty in this world in spite of their having depended upon so great a Lord. And in their flight of righteous anger, they have

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produced some of the finest poetry Oriya literature has ever produced. Lord Jagannātha continues to be a theme in modern Oriya literature also. Whole historical novels have been written with Jagannāth as the sole determining theme. Jagannātha has been one of the most familiar archetypes used in modern Oriya poetry with nuances of meaning that has an indefatigable range. The institution of Jagannāth has been a very fascinating, though popular subject for research, even attracting the attention of foreign scholars. The cult of Jagannāth has been, as it were by a taken-for-granted consensus, acclaimed as *Jagannātha dharma* and described as the real *dharma* of Orissa. Poets have sung of Him as the veritable leader of Orissa, the dispenser of all what happens here. Some again have claimed that He only rules Orisaa. A few enthusiasts almost with a proselytising zeal, have taken Jagannātha now to the country's capital and protagonists have also begun to go abroād to propagate what they call the great message of the great Lord. The familiar car festival at Puri is now being introduced in other countries and other capitals of this country and many in Orissa deem it to be an appropriate revival and a way that has answer to many of the problems of man to-day. All this indeed, seems to be very interesting, exhilarating and yet, also smacks of a real superficiality and a real overdoing somewhere.

Because, in spite all this anthropomorphic extravagance, things are not actually what they are lauded to be. The entire institution has always

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remained to be like the very structure of the feudalistic society of which it happens to be a property. In the days of the kings, it was a victim of the conspiracy between the king, the temple priests and the Brahmins at large to keep up a feudal order that had no place for man as man. After the kings have been no longer there, the pact has been between the priests and the higher-ups in a caste society. The daily ritual and the festivals round the year only suggest a very complicated web of ceremonial detail which seem to imagine the great Lord as the head of a feudalistic order. Whatever may have been the professions by the most vocal, the temple of Jagannatha at Puri is not open to all people irrespective of caste, colour and creed. Within the premises of the temple itself, it appears as if God and Mammon co-existed there in a happy sort of alliance. It is said that by the southern gate of the temple, there has been installed a special icon since when no one knows, of which the lowly in the society who are not entitled for an entrance into the temple have a *dārśan* and thus can persuade themselves to believe that they have by that got a real *dārśan* of the Lord of the Universe. Even the many decades of independence have not been able to make a change in the tradition. As it will be known in the subsequent chapters, only the saints as a group who occupy a special place of glory in Oriya literature have protested against the ignominy, have sought alternatives, but yet a break-through has not been possible. And while the old rigidities continue, the protagonists including the many of them in literature

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go on shouting out to the world that Lord Jagannâthà stands for amity, for equality and for fraternity among all people.

The *Dēvadāsis* have been a part of the usages in the temple of Lord Jagannātha. There are indications to believe that the custom prevailed once also in the Lingarāja temple at Bhūbaneśwar as well as in the temples of the goddesses at Jhankada and Kākatapūr in coastal Orissa. By the very arrangements of things, the Dēvadāsis or the Māhāris, as they are known in Orissa, were consecrated to the presiding deities of the temples in which they were employed as such. They were employed to sing songs to the god and present dance performances for his recreation and pleasure. It is said that when Gaudiya Vaishnavism came to Orissa and came to prevail upon as the religion nearest to the king's heart, the monks of that fold did not like the idea of young women dancing before the deities. They thought there was something obscene and vulgar in the whole usage. After that, young boys replaced the women. They were dressed as damsels and danced before the gods. The custom gradually spread to the courts and thus the king and his court constellation came to have the privilege of witnessing it. Then it became a public pattern and thus the traditional *Gotipūa* dance had its inception. The *Odissi* style in Indian classical schools of dance seems to have imbibed much of its form and spirit from the *Dēvadāsi* tradition, and it needs to be noted that while some other classical dance forms of India, like the Kathākali for example, have suitably adapted themselves to modern themes and

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motifs, Odissi continues to be the same old combination, where the individual dancer has often very little to contribute except her grace and bodily suppleness. The *gurus* seem to be very much bound to the past patterns and innovation seems to be as it were a taboo with many of them.

The pages of this chapter have tried to give in brief an idea of the frame of reference upon which we can discuss the phase by phase development of Oriya literature. In most of the discussions done thus far on it in the language itself, the dominating vein in the whole treatment has been anything but critical. One of the ways an uncritical attitude expresses itself is an attitude which assumes that a thing is great because it is one's very own. This attitude often keeps us debarred from the real insights and deprives us of the bredth of vision that any real discussion of literature really demands. There have been of course very commendable exceptions in this field, specially when you deal with this subject not with a student clientele before you who has to pass an examination by making use of your books as faithfully as possible, but when you are ready to explore into the depths, the total climate that helps a particular period of literature unfold before you with its real dimensions. A discussion on literature raises more questions and opens up yet unexplored vistas. It provokes more than it pacifies. Above all, it enables you to look at literature, including your own, more creatively and with a better sense of commitment.

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CHAPTER III

THE EARLIEST SPECIMENS

Periods in literature do not come in terms of one exclusively following another. We study a literature in terms of a few periods solely for reasons of convenience. These periods do not really give in to another which succeeds them. They just evolve into another and thus depict a process of development that is always there. The history of any literature, therefore, should be looked at and conceived as a continuum consisting of an unendling chain of challenges and responses. These challenges are always there, they are more acute for a more sensitive and creative mind. The contemporary society determines to a very great extent the nature in which the challenges are sensed and the emphases given. They also broadly set the ranges in which responses express themselves.

Orissa as a stretch of land politically demarcated as a state has about twenty-five million people living in it according to the latest census. It means three to four percent of the entire population of the whole country. Not all these people have Oriya as their mother tongue. About one fourth of the total population of Orissa are the Ādivāsis. The latter, though they live in Orissa, do not speak Oriya, in their homes. Oriya is only the

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language of their contacts with others and the language at the schools where their childeren go for a formal education. Their real nourishment is their own language. These languages are the first languages of the land. Oriya is a later arrival and to be more precise, a later evolution. It was recognized as a language of real import by the *Rajahs* and the upper classes including the *pundits* only much later after it was in vogue as a language among the people. Only after that, books came to be written in the language, and with that the thing now we call Oriya literature really came to exist.

According to the latest figures, the state of Orissa has only less than thirty percent of its people who are literate. The rest seventy percent happen to be those that speak and understand the language, but do not read or write it. About half of the children of school-going age in Orissa have yet to be enrolled in schools and about half of those who get admitted to Standard I become drop-outs as they reach the level of Standard V. These again have no share in the literature which goes in the name of the language and the land in which they do have a share. The findings of region-wise studies reveal that more than 80%of the people of Orissa are rural and about three-fourths of these again are condemned to live under the official poverty line. Most of the village people who get some formal education usually leave the villages and prefer to live in urban areas. About half the villages do not get good drinking water nor is there any all-weather approach road to an equal number of them. Thus, for reasons like these literature also becomes a property and privilege of

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those who live in the urban localities, though, ironically enough, a real process of urbanization has yet to make itself felt in the life of the people of Orissa. The very few that have thus some access to Oriya literature speak nevertheless of a national literature perhaps mainly to bring themselves in the glamour line with what happens in the neighbouring languages outside Orissa. For them, a nation does not seem to mean the people first and foremost. Thus, their literature also is condemned to mean only a sort of otherworldly goods made for some people's pastime and pleasure as it were.

Sāralā Dās, the writer of the Oriya Mahābhārata (Ch.IV) mentions in his book that even Lord ShriKrishna had learnt the Oriya language among others while he was at school. Needless to say, this is not correct. A student of Orissan history goes to point out that Orissa began to have a real contact with north India through the links that Buddhism was able to provide it, but the Drāvida culture of the south not only had a distinct mark on the Oriya script and language, it had also a deep and wide-ranging influence on its socio-cultural set-up, incluing its religious life. It has been pointed out though, that the rock edicts of both Ashoka and Khārave'la were not inscribed in the language of the land itself, the people then had definitely a language of their own, perhaps both spoken and written. There was evidently an oral tradition though a written one was yet to take over. The Oriya language evolved out of the interaction between the Austric patterns of speech, the Dravidian tongue from the South and also the

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various *Apabhramsas* that came along the fringes of Orissa through an Aryan migration. Sanskrit came next with the air of superiority which had always characterized it. To start with, the *Ūdrabhāsa* was accepted as a *bibhāsā* in the Sanskrit quarters. It is strange to observe that the very first plates thought to have been granted by the kings of Orissa happen to be not in Sanskrit but in Prākrit. A Māṭhara king of the middle of the 4th century A.D. is said to have granted a plate where Sanskrit was used for the very first time. From then on right upto the Gangas, the plates have been invariably written in Sanskrit. It is the historian's surmise that a few Oriya words then in vogue came to steal themselves into the Sanskrit sentences of the plates from the time of the Bhaūmakaras. It may be explained thus: a king gave an order for a plate to be written, the court *pundits* provided the text for it in Sanskrit, but the actual carvers who inscribed the sentences may not have been always people who knew the language. Hence percolations could take place and after plates had been written, nothing could be done except to pass them on as such. This was how the purity of the Sanskrit language was broken and intrusions made way to the next shape of things to come. Even as late as the reign of the Solārs who came after the Gangas, the scripts of the plates granted had not evolved to be the circular shape as Oriya scripts are found to be to-day. It may be the nature of the Dravidian script that has played as a factor in making for the change. The plates issued by the first among the Solars, Kapilendra, have been inscribed both in Telugu as well as in Oriya. A few of

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the plates that have been granted by him and found in South India have at once three versions—Sanskrit, Oriya and Telugu.

Kapilendra himself is alleged to have been a poet. In a drama, that goes by his name and as such written in Sanskrit, there is a song in Oriya which the queen rôle has to sing. Women in the very value system of that society belonged to an inferior lot and thus were not entitled to speak in Sanskrit even in a drama. King Kapilendra seems to have followed that tradition only. It has been inferred by students of this period of Orissa's history that while the Gangas had been all in for the Sanskrit language, Kapilendra for the first time gave full patronage to Oriya and thus gave it a real chance to flourish. That seems to be an over-statement. The life, thinking and therefore also the language of the people were then leagues apart from the sphere of the royal interests and inclinations. The *pundits* were on the side of the king. The transition from Sanskrit to Oriya was taking place not in the court, but in literature that was being created by the non-pundits but the creative among the people, leagues away from the court. The fight was on, away from the fights in which the powerful king was busy to acquire new territories. The *pundits* were also away in the courts, far away from the people in the sphere of their commitments.

The spoken language always precedes a written language, and Orissa has not been an exception to the rule. The spoken language has always had more life

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and dynamism about it than the written one and is privileged to be more free than the language or literature at the court. It is more receptive and more willingly vulnerable. Oriya language has also evolved through its various stages through this inherent dynamism, irrespective of the favour or disfavour shown to it by the court and the *pundits*. Austric, Dravidian and Sanskrit have been its three sources, its vocabulary has come from all the three and the main channels have been through the many A*pabhramsas* of the region, which were themselves admixtures of the native speeches of the region and Sanskrit. From the initial status of a spoken language, Oriya attained status only afterwards and the king came only last to recognize it as a language as such. A hypothesis says that the regional languages of India got their distinctive forms after the eleventh century A. D. King Kapile'ndra belongs to the fourteenth century. It was during his reign that Oriya came to be accepted as medium in the plates. It cannot be said that even the *pundits* in his court would have so easily agreed to the change intended. One may also infer that spoken Oriya must have earned for it a good base for a further take-off during the periods of the Buddhist monarchs and also in the regions they happened to have sway. The Brahminic infuences and also the kings who had patronized them must have been adverse factors in that process of development. But ultimately it was the language that won. Its hour was come and hence all the other factors had to give way. A language, anywhere, can be said to have come of age and to stay, not becuse of

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the kings and the *pundits* through the ages, but in spite of them.

As the stuff and stock of literature in Orissa came to be reckoned as Oriya literature and as the educated e'lite of the land came to be conscious about themselves as a distinct group with a heritage of their own, there was a tendency and an enthusiasm felt to be very natural to stretch the language and the literature as far back into history as one could go. This tendency started in Orissa perhaps last of all. The Bengalis were the very first pioneers, then came the Hindi enthusiasts and then those who wanted to give Assamese and Maithili their first pillars of testimony. as far back in the past as possible. Last came their counterparts in Oriya. The efforts gathered more momentum as the nationalistic consciousness broke into regional adherences of an exclusive variety. Little traditions claimed to say that they were no less great than the great tradition, The tendency was hailed as heroic at least within the emotional boundaries of the respective regions. And all this happened only in this century, when the e'lite who were too sceptical to wholeheartedly join the ferment for freedom at the national level felt tempted to show themselves with a certain bigness in the arenas of regional prowess and achievement.

WORKS OF THE SIDDHĀCHĀRYAS

A whole horde of Siddhas and Āchāryas belonging to later Buddhism had left the eastern part of India

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and moved towards the north to Nepal and to Tibbet during the period from the 8th to the 11th century. What were the motivating factors behind this migration of the Āchāryas is still to be established beyond doubt. There are reasons to infer that they had not taken to the migration with the normal intention of propagating their own religious creed. There is an opinion saying that they had fled from India. This was a bad day for Buddhism and its fold in Bengal and the neighbouring tracts; the Brahmanic creed was on the rise and getting royal patronage. Buddhist Āchāryas were hounded out and persecuted, and it may also be that some of these, in their efforts at finding a place of greater safety had run away to the two Himalayan land-tracts. They had carried the Charyāpadas with them, meaning the songs and the *padas* they had composed in *la langue intentionael*, or in *Sandha Bhāsā* as it is traditionally called. Some of these *padas* had been preserved with the people there, and they were discovered in the early years of this century by a scholar from Bengal, the reputed Shri Haraprasad Sastri, who made study of them and identified them to be some earliest specimens Bengali language and literature. At that moment, the others also had accepted them to be that. But gradually others also came to study them and the hypotheses with which each of them had started the studies very much decided what their conclusion was going to be. The Hindi scholars proclaimed the Āchāryas to be the first pioneers of Hindi literature, the Maithili scholars concluded that the language was Maithili and the Assamese said the *padas* were in Assamese. They were studied and probed into by

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scholars in Orissa and the most popular reaction was that they were written in Oriya and that the Āchāryas had migrated from Orissa. Inevitably, other sentiments also added more flesh to the conclusions.

The scholars who came after the pioneer ones in Bengali, Hindi as well as in Oriya were nearer to truth. They said that the language type and style in which the Āchāryas had written those *padas* were the prototype of all the languages of the region, Bengali, Assamese, Hindi, Maithili and Oriya. It was a kind of *Āpabhramsa* which can be at once identified as Māgadhi, *Sauraseni* and the like. Hence our conclusion should be, during those centuries under discussion, Oriva, Bengali, Hindi or Assamese had not evolved and split up into different languages, neither were there clearly-demarcated geographical regions in accordance with these languages. The various shades of the *Apabhramsas* with the local departures were perhaps in vogue as languages. Thus, the *padas* the Acharyas had composed and the tunes in which they sang those *padas* were perhaps prevalent all over north-eastern India, including Orissa.

It is said that the Nepalese people had taken down the *padas* for their own use and could sing them themselves. This should suggest that they did understand their meanings. The *padas* have been translated into the Tibetan and Sankrit languages, and not into Nepalese. To do full justice to the studies of the *padas* a scholar must have a knowledge of Sanskrit, Tibetan, all the *Apabhramsas* of eastern India, besides

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the philological structure of his own language. At least for an Oriya scholar it should be expected that he should not go into a study like this without acquiring a knowledge of Tibetan.

The Charyāpadas were rendered into Sanskrit sometime about the 12th or 13th century. Some of the Āchāryas themselves also wrote not only in *Apabhramsa* but also in Sanskrit. Most of the Sanskrit treatises were on Yoga and Tantra and these have been translated into Tibetan also. The Āchāryas who had gone to Nepal aud Tibet with their *padas* belonged to various regions of eastern India. Persecuted by the people and the powers that be as an aftermath of a Brahmanic revival, the Āchāryas had run away to take shelter in the comparatively more isolated habitations in the Himalayas. These Āchāryas were of the *Vajrayana* and the *Sahajayana* varieties of Buddhism. The whole story of the Buddhistic religious creed has a downward curve which gives us an idea of what all happened in its history. With the patronage of kings it gradually lost much of its real lustre and vigour and became a duplication of Hindusim which it had originally came to reform. The Orissa of those centuries was a great seat of *Vajrayāna*. With yet greater dose of Tantra, *Vajaayāna* further degenerated into the subsequent lows, ceremoniously called *Sahajayāna* and *Mahāsūkhāyana*. The name Orissa is since then associated with *Ūdrayāna* or *Uddiyana*, a tantric variety with some distinctive features. Both Hinduism and Buddhism were victims of the temptations from Tantra at one of its phases of degeneration and

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excess. Women were needed as an ingredient in men's flirtations with Tantric Sādhanā. The De'*vadāsis* were perhaps an invention of this age. It has been supposed also that the custom at first prevailing in Orissa spread from here to Bengal when the latter was being ruled by the Burmans.

It was a time when the higher classes of Indian society were either *Śunyavādi* Buddhists or they were Hindus using the *Purānas* as their most familiar scriptures. The lower classes had to be content with *Sahajayana* and the *Nātha* cult. The lowest ranks in the social hierarchy both among the Hindus and the Bauddha embraced the *Natha* cult. Upon this context, it can be inferred that the Āchrāyas of the Charyāpada fame really hailed from the lower classes. Women of the lower castes have been assigned the role of a Bhairabi (the female counterpart in the Sādhanā) by the Āchāryas. This will futher point out that an Āchārya belonging to a lower class colud not expect a highly born woman to be his companion in the Sādhanā. The whole practice must have looked very despicable in the eyes of the established classes of society and thus coming to be looked down upon by them, the Āchāryas must have run away to Nepal and Tibet to provide some credal satisfaction to the otherwise deprived sections of the populace in those countries. It must be remembered that women had obtained entrance to the Buddhist Saṃgha already when the great Buddha was in his body, though very much against his own will and being forced by his disciples to allow the order this concession. While in

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the Samghas, the women were nevertheless condemned to remain women, subordinate to the male Bhikshus With the onset of *Vajrayāna* and the subsequent other *Yānas* these women came to be used as means in the men's *Sādhanā*. The man was the *Sādhaka*, the woman was a sort of sacred commodity whom he had a need of. The scriptures of the related schools have described the woman thus used as the *Gabhi* (cow) of the soul, soul meaning here, of course the soul of man only.

Thus the so pompously described *Dombis* and *Sabaris* of the Charyā pada were little more than commodities to be used as a means to attain to *Mahāsukhapitha*, the *summum bonum* of a Sādhaka belonging to that school. The women concerned were really not loved, they were not accepted with that sense of respect and honour due to a partner in love or *Sādhanā*; they were used and made to undergo the entire ritual because the male needed them for his own fulfilment, his success in the *Sādhanā* and his own realization. And in describing the male *Sādhaka's* anguish for the female's company, the Āchāryas used an entirely different code as a language, which was very much in variation with the normal language then used by the people. The lines were clothed in an outer garb of obscenity, intentionally as it were to keep the real meaning away from all those who lived outside the range of the esoterically chosen ones. Was this extra gloss meant to attract new converts to the group or was it a device to escape the wrath of the accepted mores of society? These are questions which still remain to be answerd.

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CHAPTER IV

THE ORIYA MAHABHARATA

By the time the great poet Sāraḷa Dās produced the Oriya Mahābhārat, perhaps one of the most precious treasures Oriya literature has ever produced, Oriya language as a vehicle of literature had come of age and come to its own. As one goes through the lines of the Oriya Mahābhārata, one has never an impression that the author of it had at all to struggle with an unformed language to get the right expressions. The words seem to have come to him with ease and thus he had not to grope about for them in order to find them out. From where did Sāraḷā Dās really get these words and those expressions? To attain that ease a language must have developed well enough by then. It does not at all seem that he had to fabricate them from nowhere as it were. This often tempts one to believe that there must have existed other specimens of literature before Sāraḷa Dās, through which it had got a real shape. But nothing of that sort is extant now to provide the clues.

Oriya language was a part of the life of the majority of people and had a dynamics of its own, though it was not allowed into the courts and the sacred scriptures. The scholars and the *pundits* had an attitude of hatred towards it, they were in all probability afraid of it. The fear really prevented

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them to bring the real language of the people to the court. There is no doubt that they also spoke Oriya at home and that Oriya was the medium of inter-communication as far as life in society was concerned. Nevertheless it was deemed impure by the Brahmins and was not allowed an access into the sphere of religion and into the kings' court. The attitude continues even to-day. Even now, the few who are more privilegedly placed in society do not entertain the idea that the language which they can use with the greatest ease, in which they dream all their dreams, express their deepest emotions most easily should also be used in the *durbars*, the offces to which they only have an access. They have so contrived things that another language, which they only have been privileged to know is used in administration, in the sanctuaries of learning and of what they call civilized life. That they adore as the language of the people who really matter and who really decide, of the Śiṣtas, as the term was used in Sāraḷa Dās's time.

The whole attitude does have a reason. The reason prevailed then in those early days when things were just beginning to move as also to-day, when we seem to have developed pretty much in acquiring the where-withals of a saner and better living. Then also, people spoke all sorts of languages. There were the Austric tongues, the several *Apabhramsas* and also the regional variations. But the kings patronized only one language, it was the Sanskrit language. Evidently they did not use Sanskrit as a spoken language at home, like the

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Brahmins and the tribes of scholars, they also spoke the language of common parlour. Nevertheless, only Sanskrit got their patronage. Sanskrit was the language of the scriptures of all formal learning, and thus learning had been cut off from life and the kings and the *pundits* were leagues away from the people. In other words, they looked down upon the very language they spoke, looked at the language of the people with despise perhaps in order to demonstrate that they were more and stood higher. They were very proud about their knowledge of Sanskrit and gave no importance at all to their own mother tongue. Their knowledge of Sanskrit provided them with a means of livelihood, because they interpreted for the people the Sanskrit scriptures and earned their bread in that way. The larger society was thus very much dependent on them and the arrangement was a part of the very arrangement of the economic life of society. The arrangement helped perpetuate an unjust social order.

This obsession with Sanskrit had so much caught deep into the very thinking of the upper classes in Orissa that to write a book in Oriya and introduce it into a king's court was almost an anathema. The Ganga rulers were patrons of Sanskrit language. The intolerance of the *pundits* was a reason why the language of the people had to develop and grow under terrible limitations. Authors in Oriya even up to as late as 16th and 17th centuries felt a sort of inhibition in writing in that language and had to provide explanations for having decided to write in Oriya. There are traces

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of the same spite and the same hesitations even as far as the beginning of the twentieth century at least in some parts in Orissa. It is really almost confounding to think why a mother language has been so jealous and so afraid of those others which the former can with full justification claim to be its further extensions. Predominantly, the reasons have been social and economic. In spite of all this *holier than thou* attitude, Sanskrit has not been able to flower itself up into a full-grown language, which has been able to bring out all its innate potentialities and possibilities. It has been condemned to remain a language of the *pundits* and to stagnate in its own glass-house as it were. If, in stead of keeping Sanskrit closed within the prescribed circles, it could have been given a chance to come to all, to embrace all and to include the entire rank and file, then it would have not only remained a living language, moving nearer to life, influencing it and being enriched by it, but in that case our society, culture and our world-view here in India would have been of a different kind and of a healthier kind. Our human relationships here would have been of a different kind also, more life-and-world-affirming than they have been.

RŪDRASUDHĀNIDHI

The specimen of early Oriya language on the plates granted by the ruling chiefs of those centuries cannot be said to be representative of the state of Oriya language, then actually prevalent. It must have been usually the court *pundiis* who provided a text for the plates and strived strenuously to give an artificial and Sanskritized

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coat to what was meant for the common people. Thus what was actually the state and range of ability of the Oriya language at that time cannot be deciphered from the structure of the texts on the plates. The literary specimens on the other hand which have now been brought to light are really very few. At least a few Āchāryas of the Charyāpadas already discussed were from the tract that now embodies Orissa and thus the language they have used can give us some insight into the way Oriya was evolving and shaping out of the melting pots. The next two specimens are the 'Rūdrasūdhānidhi' and the 'Kaḷasā Chaūtiśa'. The former is an illustration of literary prose. The author is Shri Nārāyaṅa Abadhūta Swāmi, said to be a holy man who had renounced the world. The style is one of telling a story and reads like a novel. From this point of view, the work can more be taken as an interesting novel than one having any religious message to give. The main vein of the story is amorous and the author seems to be at his best when he is describing this-worldly love and like kinds of infatuation. He has passages composed in praise of Rūdra, Vishnu and Jagannāth in his book not because he was a devotee of at once all the three nor because he wanted to build out a synthesis of the three ways, but perhaps these three ways were prevailing in the society in which he happened to move and thus had to take cognizance of them.

It is said about the ancient and medieval ages that whatever a poet or an author had to say through the writings he produced, he had to do it with a garb of religious description around it. Everything could be

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condoned to get into literature if it were not men but gods who were the media through which it was said. Inhibitions of all kind had made the range of an author's movement actually very. limited and thus, if the latter wanted to give vent to his emotion and ebullitions, he could do it through the gods and hence did not appear vulgar and blasphemous. The whole arrangement provided a sort of katharsis to the author as well as to his readers and was therefore welcome. The Pūrāṇas were perhaps its most illustrious example in poetry. As far as prose is concerned, they were the fore-runners of the novel. Abadhuta Swāmi's 'Rūdrasūdhānidhi was a work of that kind. His style has continued to be followed right through the next many centuries.

ORIYA NATHA LITERATURE

The early Oriya specimens of the Nātha literature also seem to fall into this category. Nātha cult has built itself upon an exclusive emphasis on *Hathayoga* which was prevailing in India as a very old tradition At a time when the higher strata in society took pleasure in philosophical Buddhism or dabbled in the Brahmanic injunctions, the lower strata got an outlet in the Nātha doctrine of the perfect body. It could reach all the lay quarters in society which had been forbidden an access to the religions of the elite and appeared as it were as a popular edition of traditional Yoga, Tantra and Vajrayāna Buddhism of the Indian great tradition. Besides those who had run away, there were also many others of the cult in Orissa and they had taken to names in imitation of the great names of the cult, Gorakhanātha and Matsyendra-

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nârha. What these *yogis* composed and sang as their cult literature has definitely served as an intermediary step in helping the then prevailing *Apabhramsa* reach a state of further distinction and in the long run earn a distinguished shape called Oriya. As in Hindi as well as Bengali, there is some poetry of the cultish variety associated with the name of Gorakhanāth and this has led some scholars at times to believe that the original Goraksha was actually from Orissa itself.

The 'Kaḷasā Chautisā" of Bachhā Dāsa is a brilliant piece of a specimen in the Oriya literature of all ages, though it has been ascribed to the pre-Sāralā period. Chautisas are poems where the stanzas begin, one by one, with the letters of the Oriva alphabet, which number thirty-four. The Kaḷasa depicts in lucid poetry the marriage of Shiva with Umā, the main emphasis being on the humour with which the poet has depicted the whole episode. Bachhā Dāsa describes the would-be wed bridegroom as a disabled old man, decrepit with asthma, and Ūmā's agony at the thought that she has to cast her lot with this queer odd thing for a whole life. It may be that in the process of being copied and copied again through the ages, the original text has managed to get a chastened form in which it appears to-day, but the Kaḷasā continues to remain an inimitable instance of the fact that so much mirth can be created and made available to the reader by presenting a god as a laughable old stock of a bridegroom that in appearance is no match for the most beautiful bride contemplated on earth. Kalasā in its own time became without doubt so much adored as a piece of poem that the musical

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metre in which it was written continued for many centuries after it to be used by many other poets. In view of the very developed language and style of the Kaḷasā, Bachhā Dāsa, the author is sometimes considered to have belonged to a much later period. But it can be nevertheless claimed that whatever the age, he is by far the best among the many Chaūtisā writers in Oriya. We are not sure if he has written only one Chaūtiṣā, nor if has written Chaūtisās only. But unfortunately nothing more has been available of him. All glory to a literature that has so lucid and so profound a poet at its early stages Though Kalasā presents its author primarily as a *bhakta* who has Lord Shiva as his object of adoration, yet there is no trace in it of the self-mortifying type of *bhakti* in Bachhā Dasa, *a bhakti* that only asks for and complains about what all one wanted to get and has not got yet. The real *bhakti* literature is perhaps one which speaks with a sense of proximity with the object one wants to attain and to adore, a sense that brings you nearer and nearer, so nearer that it gives you that total and integral feeling of healthy-mindedness which takes away from you all the fever and the anguish associated with seeking.

THE FOLKLORIC HERITAGE

The folk songs and folk stories have no age. No one can ascertain how old they are and who are the people who composed them. They have been in Orissa as a real part of the life of the people since about the beginning of sharing and corporate living. Scholars collected a whole bunch of them and have traced them

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to have belonged to those early periods of Oriya language and literature. Lately, there have also been studies of these songs and stories and there are special organizations now all over the world and special techniques to classify and study them. In Orissa, the scholars of the folklore that once was, and is fast disappearing from the areas where it once occupied so much place in the people's life, have been drawn to it mainly with a sentimental attitude. It is a fact, all the world over, that as music and mirth disappear from the life of apeople, there are scholars who rush in from outside as it were, collect evidenty those songs and lores, make scientific studies of them and then go to store them in books and in the museums. The process has now started also in Oriya and the so-called students of folklore appear to study them with an entirely museum interest as it were. So that we may be able to understand the folk through the study of folklore and can really make useful and valuable projections for the future, our love to collect it should be substantiated with a knowledge of anthropology and social psychology. This has yet to begin in Orissa as far as the study of folklore is concerned.

The flok-stories current in Orissa collected by the one-eyed collectors are not really only Oriya folk-stories. Like folk religion and folk modes of worship, the folk stories also have a world-wide spread and have therefore migrated from place to place. It simply indicates that the unsophisticated people of the early societies, however closed they might have been intellectually, were very much universal in their emotional life and hence spun out almost the same stories with of course a frame

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that appeared to be local. Many of the stories have been collected from different parts of Orissa or that, after we have collected them, we classify as folk stories from Orissa, can be traced to have existed in various other parts of the country as well as of the world, though with a certain variation. The stories of a little tradition have always a link with the inspirations from the great tradition. Thus we are not justified when we tend to call them only our own. The dimensions of our studies have to change if we intend a proper study of folk stories we have collected from the life that is around us.

The people who really live and sing the folk-songs have never had the intention to collect them. Folk song is always a part of the life of a folk. Those who show a special fervour for their collection do that for the intellectual pleasure of those who are alienated and have lost the real roots in society. And the people who yet have the folk songs have them and sing them mostly in order to reconcile themselves with a fate which they have been led to believe they cannot change. A society that lacks mobilty and thus has to live with built-in inabilities as it were provides a very fertile ground for these folk songs. Our folk songs in Oriya do suggest that inability to motivate a change. The more clever people who collect the lores and the songs falsely feel a sense of identification with the people they definitely are not through the activity and often find a reason to excuse themselves of the role they keep on playing to keep a major section of the people subdued, resigned to their lot and given to singing and wailing as a compensation for their inability.

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Needless to say, the study of folk lore and folk songs does have a usefulness in studying the various turns and styles a language has taken in the process of its evolution. But it should be cruel to expect that quite a segment of our people in society should be left disabled, deprived, aspiring really very little and drag on with what the more sophisticated call a simple life, only because we shall then continue to have the privilege of collecting their songs and their lore. The helplessness and the miserable existence that most of the folklore collected by us reflects has often no *raison de'tre* in the modern world. The scholar collectors could do a real service to all concerned, if they studied the available folklore basically with this attitude of the mind, but for that they must be able to divest themselves of very much of the sentimentality which seems to have so much engrossed their horizons. To study life is primarily to share with life and to share really is to liberate.

Then come the festivities and the folk observances, the Oṣâs, as they are called in the Oriya language. There are awfully plenty of them in Orissa and behind each, there is also a story justifying its observance. It should be clear that the stories have come only afterwards and have been added to the observances in order to offer a bait and inspire a compulsion as it were. The stories also have changed versions from time to time. Hence, it may not be always wise to take these stories as specimens of our early oral tradition and count them as part of our early literature. The stories have been now printed and are

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available for the convenience of the people who observe them. Undoubtedly the texts must have undergone structural changes in the very process. These festivities and observances have evidently their origin in the Pre-Aryan animistic times when fear was the only relationship between man and nature. The Aryans have continued to keep many a vestige of those early times, and there have been several Aryan versions and even innovations to them from time to time. Special festivities and observances have later been added in respect of the Aryanized gods but always with the same style and appealing to the same instincts of the primitive in man. But, interestingly enough, the Ādivāsis or the Austrics themselves are now not observing these, though these have been appropriated from the Austric cultural complex. To be more precise, even among the people of Orissa, only the comparatively higher up and better off seem to be observing them. The observances more often than not reflect the chasms and distances between man and man and class and class in society, evolved as they have upon a social matrix that believes in and depends upon these distances and chasms.

It is a fact that a vast majority of the people in our society still continue to be in the level of these festivities and propitiatory activities as far as a religious life is concerned. These are prescribed mainly for women, who observe them to bring more luck to men. It could not be otherwise in a society as ours. The Oṣā stories clearly reflect the inner intricacies of our social value-system, and the idols of the market-place

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that guide most of our motives and the lure of an easy turnover and success in life that keeps you day-dreaming and unaspiring at the same time. Most of the Oṣā tradition at its best. has acted as an encouragement to conform, and at its worst, acted as a soporific to keep people sleeping.

SĀRALA DĀSA

All this is a prelude to a discussion of the achievements of Sāralā Dāsa, the writer of the Oriya Mahābhārata. He has been rightly acclaimed as the Ādikabi by whoever have discussed Oriya literature, because his Oriya Mahābhārata is the first specimen of what is really Oriya literature. And a very brilliant specimen also. Śāralā Daśa wrote his Mahābhārata sometime in the middle of the fifteenth century when Kapile'ndra was the king of Orissa. His real name by birth was Siddhe'śwara Paridā or Dāsa and he says that he took his later new name, because whatever he could achieve as a poet and as an author was because of the grace of goddess Śāralā, the deity of his village Jhankada, situated in the district of Cuttack. In the Mahābhārata again, he speaks of himself as almost a half-literate person, who did not have any initiation into the learning of the time. The years of his life, he further says, had been a waste in unworthy company and he had never sat together with Brahmins who had any real knowledge of the scriptures, had never made any gūrū nor he had practised any austerity with any special *mantra* as his guide. But he has also told us in the same work that in one of his previous

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births he was Kāḷidāsa, the great name from Ujjain almost ten centuries ago.

'Sāralā's Mahābhārata is anything but a faithful translation of the original work in Sanskrit; on the contrary, it is a new creation in itself. Taking the main purport of the story of the Sanskrit Mahābhārata as a skeleton minimum, he has added all the variations of flesh to it to build it into a full structure complete by itself Many things and themes of the original have been eliminated and many others have been added. There have been changes in emphasis in several places. For example the portion that contains the *Śrimadbhagabadgitā* gets only a cursory treatment and is done with only in a few lines. Though the number of the *parvas* has remained the same, the titles are different. There have been elaborations of some *parvas* and some others again have found a place into the work only because its author wanted them. Coming to the particular characters of the great epic, Śāralā Dāsa has depicted Karna to be a greater hero than Arjuna, symbolizing dignity, real achievement and prowess. Krishna seems to be very much less of a god-stature and often carries an impression of having been not very much more than a senior accomplice on the side of the Pāndavas. Stories have been woven out in and out of occasion to convince the reader as it were that one ought to go to Mahābhārata primarily for the sake of the stories and not for its religious implications, which is just a garb for the stories. Nevertheless, there is also a very deep appeal to religion in the work which is above anything else still used as a religious book, a *Purāṇa*

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where gods speak to men and provide a precept. Lord Jagannāth of Puri has been sung by the author of the Oriya Mahābharata as the source of all *Avatāras* of God. Jagannāth is the embodiment, in one conception, of Brahmā, Vishnū and Śiva He is also the great Buddha. Yet more interesting and intriguing is Śāralā Dāsa's presentation of how Jagannāth came to be in His present shape in the *Kali* era. According to him, it was Ekalavya, the Śabara boy of the *Dwāpara* era who grew up to become Jārā, whose destiny it was to be an instrument for Lord Krishna's departure from the world. After His death, a portion of the half-burnt body served to become the essential *Śarira* of the deities now being worshipped in the temple of Puri.

Scholars have found out reasons to believe that by the time to which Śāralā Dāsa belonged, the three traditions of Yoga, Tantra and Kāmaśāstra had come to mix up with one another to form a queer amalgam, and that the poet particularly studied Vātsāyana, the code-maker of Indian eroticism It was the time also when Vajrayāna and Sahajayāna had just gone through the periods of their flourish and were very much in the air. The erotic presentations on stone on the temple walls of Orissa suggest how the sacred and the profane had compromised into a co-existence and were confused enough to suggest each other. Śāralā Dāsa was not a poet of the court, he was very much of the village to which he owed all his nurture. It was the deity of the village that gave him the sensibilities of a poet and it was in the same village also that he wrote all the three

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major works of his life namely : the Mahābhārata, the Bilankā Rāmāyana and the Chandi Pūrāna. In the last of these books Śāralā Dāsa mentions that he got the name Śūdramuni for himself by the grace of the great Mother of the world, nevertheless it may be assumed that it must have been a very tough job for the poet to write books and to get them recognized by contemporary taste so far away from the king and his court, and, as a final climax, to proclaim himself Śūdramūni. It is not true that the poet called himself so, because he belonged to the Sūdra or non-Brahmin class. It was a time all the *Pundits* were invariably Brahmins and looked upon all who wrote and yet belonged to the outgroups as nothing but Śūdras. As a straight challenge to it and for refutation of this prejudice of the *Pundits,* Sāralā Dasa seems to have voluntarily given this title to himself He was the first in Oriya literature to prove that a Sūdra can also be a *muni* and wanted to smash an e'lite superstition.

LITERATURE OF PROTEST

The works of Sāraḷā Dāsa are a literature of protest. They were a protest against the poets and writers of the court at a time all literature was possible only when the latter was there to patronize it· It was a protest against the empty religiousities of the time with the king as its protagonist, and also against all writing in Sanskrit which was also patronized by the king. The real life that was then lived far away from the king and his court, the beliefs and the superstitions that had evolved in the shape of worships and inspirations out

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of the several religious traditions which had had their sway over the land, there had been almost no outlet to give an expression to these. It was Sāraḷā Dāsa who took to the pen to bring in all that to literature and filled in the gap. He brought the greater and the wider entirety of life into the realm of the Kāvya and with the broad structures of the Mahābhārat story and Mahābhārata names as an apology as it were, he could intrude into almost all the details of that entirety. He gave life to the gods of heaven and brought them down to earth. The Kūrūkshe'tra that he described was spread immediately around him and the very experiences and the insights that he had gained living in the milieu of his time gave a brilliant fervour of contemporaneity to whatever he wrote. He looked with a wide-open eye, without inhibitions and loved life as it was and had its being. The characters he created in his epic works bear a proof and a suggestion that the gods are really the outcomes of the concretizing zeal of the imaginative faculty in man, that they become more real and mobile when enriched with the inherent human capacity for myth and imaginative play. Then the gods become the channels to lead us into the innermost drives in man, where they are so mobile and so grand. In Saraḷā Dāsa we have both the chaste and the obscene, true and the untrue, possible and the impossible. And giving everything a unifying sense is the eye of a poet that can see and that has emboldened itself by the sanction of a goddess as it were to speak whatever strikes its sensibility. More than anything else, Śāraḷā Dāsa has so brilliantly proved to his times that the Oriya lânguage could make really many things possible and that in respect of the

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competence to express, Oriya would in no way fall behind Sanskrit as a medium.

Śāralā Dāsā's works contain a great range of cooked-up legends and stories, and hence very little of real history. Like all the Pūrānas of India, Sāraḷa literature is an enviable saga in poems. It is true that he had collected a huge pile of materials from the *Pūrānas* and the like, but many times more than that from the life around him. He could make everything so enticing and rich with the creative artist that was in him. In these flights of his creative courage, he could ignore so easily the lines that had bound the current gods and goddesses with sanctions of sanctity, he flouted the scriptural inhibitions and made the gods dance in the ropes of his fabricated stories and allusions. The *Pūrānas* were the most accepted reference books of that time and they had come to be written not so much to sing the glory and the power of the godheads as to establish a particular sect of worshippers and their gods as the highest and the most bounteous of all others. To appear convincing and appealing to the lay worship-obsessed mind these were full of all and sundry stories and narratives. The latter were current in the society in which Śāraḷa Dāsa lived, like a master craftsman he incorporated all that to his works giving them shapes and shines of his own innovation. That could be expected only from a Śūdra who had the courage in him to declare himself as a *mūni.*

Two instances should suffice here to illustrate the point. They involve the two gods that were then

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worshipped as the most capable ones most probably by two sects often competing with each other for an edge over the other. The first involves Śiva in the form of the *Linga* and an explanation about the beginning of Linga-worship. Śāralā Dāsa, without any support from the Śaiva scripture, takes us to the occasion when Śiva's wife Sati had to immolate herself into the sacrificial fire to save herself of the derogatory words her father Daksha had used on her face before a whole crowd that had assembled there on the occasion of a sacrifice. The news when it reached Śiva, threw the latter into great fury and he immediately rushed to the scene as the angry husband to punish the culprits. Of course it was also his father-in-law's house where it was customary to welcome the husband of the daughter of the house when he happened to come there, with a certain ceremony. As Sati's mother came to perform the ceremony as Śiva entered the place, it must have been too much of an experience for him. In a feat of complete abandon to his anger and disgust he took off the skirts of his tiger-skin which he was using as a garment, as a result of which the entire area of his private part was visible. He gave the behest to his mother-in-law to perform the necessary rituals before the *linga* thus exposed. She did do as directed but in her turn uttered the curse that he, Śiva, would be worshipped in the form of a *Linga* by the people of the world for all time to come. That is how, according to Śāraḷa Dāsa, the practice of *linga* worship came to be.

The next story is about no less a god than Krishna himself. Śāraḷa Dāsa says that Brahmā had given a

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certain instrument to Krishna with which he could get an underground tunnel dug straight to the private chamber of Rādhā, his paramour, which he could use at his convenience. The tunnel was really dug by the son that was born because of the sexual union Krishna had with a lady messenger of Rādhā whom he mistook in his passion for Rādhā herself. Krishna, it is told, taught this son of his the skill to dig tunnels with the said instrument and in a gesture of his gratitude in return the son had dug the intended tunnel for his father. The whole story has been engineered with such simplicity and wit that you begin to enjoy it and forget the tinge of obscenity it may traditionally seem to suggest.

Śaraḷā Dāsa's Mahābhārata in Oriya gives in many ways a picture of the contemporary society, in spite of the enormous myth-making he has chosen to be his style in the writing of it. The work is still a popular companion in the villages of Orissa and is still recited aloud as a *Purāna* to the village congregation for the benefit and enjoyment of all. Some of the words and idioms have permanently found their way into the Oriya language and are still in vogue. Śāraḷa's Mahābhārata is perhaps the first of its kind in any Indian language. The Bengali Mahābhārata was about two centuries after. The Mahābhārata in Telugu took as many as three poets successively to be complete and the entire thing was ready only in the eighteenth century. More than that it appears from the recorded accounts of the regional literatures of India that in no other language we have a

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poet of Śārāḷa Dāsa's stature and genius appearing as early as his time. The interest in Śāraḷā Dāsa is still on the increase in Orissa. Authentic versions of his works, specially of the Mahābhārata, have now been brought out edited by scholars, and almost every year witnesses a new book written in assessing his contributions in laying the real foundations of Oriya literature.

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CHAPTER V

THE LITERATURE OF THE SAINTS

The protest that expressed itself through the Śūdramūni further developed itself into inner-directedness in the literature of the saints who came after him. The saints dominated the realm of Oriya literature for about quite a century, from about 1450 to about 1550. Evidently there were many others, but the five personalities who predominantly characterized the literature and life of this century have come to be known as the Panchasakhā, or the five fellow-saints and writers. They were : Balarāma Dāsa, Jagannātha Dāsa, Achyūtananda Dāsa, Jaśobanta Dāsa and Ananta Dāsa. They all hailed from the two coastal districts of Puri and Cuttack and thus were not at all far from the influences of Shri Jagannātha of Puri which had then come to be the hub of so much of religious and cultural influence. Jagannātha was the pronounced *Istadevata* of all these writer-saints, but the deity for them meant much more than a mere deity. It meant a consciousness that was at once universal and transcendent, it became co-terminous with the grand Indian concept of *Brahma*, the reality that pervaded all space and time and was at once beyond the limitations of space and time.

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Sārala Dasa's Mahābhārata was as it were a bold mirror of the aspirations of the contemporary society that wanted to get away from the narrow determinations of an age-long past and come to itself, come of age, come back to its own language, to its own life in enlightenment and realization. All that was then a part of life outside the king's court but would not get an access to the court, all that was then in vogue in the sphere of religious pursuits but the official interpreters of religious life would not allow it to get a recognition, found their place in the works of Śāralā Dāsa. Celebration of life in its grandness and entirety was the supreme theme of Śāralā Dāsa's vision in his Mahābhārata. Sāralā Dāsa was a *Sadhaka* himself but he never had any intention to present religious life as confined within any particular sect, never let his eyes be imprisoned within the rigid walls of any particular way. In his heart of hearts he was perhaps not strictly a Śaiva or a Vaishnava. He was a singer and narrater of the grand story that life to him actually was. He brought the gods down to earth, gave them a redeeming touch of the life here and that really had led him to use the Oriya language as his medium of expression; it was Śāralā Dāsa who gave new maturity and ability to Oriya as a language.

By the fifteenth century, Puri had come to become a great centre of religious transaction and had begun to attract the attention of the whole country. The grand patriarchs of the great religious movements of the time had all come to Puri, had triumphed over their rivals by out-witting them and with the approval of the king

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who presided over the kingdom and the temple, got their rituals introduced into it. All this must have been done with great gusto to mark the triumphs. Lord Jagannātha had already gone through his initiation into Buddhism and Jainism, obeying the allegiance of the kings, then he had a conversion into Vaishnava order. Śiva came to be installed beside Him as His brother and the Sakti cult, in the form of Sūbhadrā was also given a place upon the same pedestal between the Saiva and the Vaishnava symbols. Then the horde of the scholar-mendicants who came to Puri from the south in turn, turned Him into a *Smārta*, into Rāma and also into Ganēśa. And last of all the surge of Vaishnavism that came from the north got the King as convert, turned Him completely into Krishna. The real Jagannātha, the Lord of the Universe got lost as it were in a medley of ritualistic vigour and ultimately was condemned to remain an idol to be subject to a jungle of various modes of worship with the king and a powerful priestcraft as caretakers and masters. The amalgam that thus happened and came to stay is often taken for a synthesis which it has not actually been.

A real synthesis points out to a definite attitude, an inner attitude for that matter, that knows how to sense the essential from amidst the huge accumulation of externalities. A real synthesis points out to a centre within, that can fix peripheries in their proper place and proper range and yet link them always to the centre. The Pancha sakhā in what they lived, preached and wrote initiated a real and sincere search for that centre,

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Their's was a call to undertake an inner voyage and to explore within, assuming that what one has to live by outside has first to be felt and found out within. For them, a way was not the primary thing; what was primary was an enquiry, an enquiry into as far as one could go in order that one could find the real centre. One's real truth resides in that centre. Once one has found the centre, he can always be able to imbibe into himself the essential kernel of all the existing *mārgas*, paths and also no particular *marga* will then be able to swallow him up in such a way that he has only a *mārga* and has lost the centre. This call to come back to one's real home did not now happen in isolation in Orissa. It was an all-India phenomenon. It was the age of the saints, and Indian literature all over was then fully saturated with what some of her mighty saints had to say through what they sang and wrote.

THE REAL CHALLENGES

This challenge to come back to the essentials and elevate religion to the status of a life in spirit was then felt all over the country and the saints of India carried the banner. Like what we find in the early principal *Ūpanisads*, they gave a call to leave the branches, the divisions and the distractions and come back to the roots, to the essence. In the plains of northern India, it was the time of Gūrū Nānak, Kabir, Dādu, Raidas and Rajjab; in Bengal it was the time when Shri Chaitanya had appeared with the might of a convincing storm that the essence of life, spiritual life included, was love, it was giving yourself wholly by which only

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you had the chance of gaining back your soul. It was Śānkaradēva's time in Kāmarupa and that of Jnānade'va, Eknāth, Nāmade'va and Tūkārām in Maharastra. In Kannada life and literature, it was then the age of the Dāsas, with Purandara Dāsa and Kanaka Dāsa as the great teachers and leaders. The whole thing cannot be said to have been just an accident and a chance coincidence; perhaps in no other phase in the literature of India have all its regional expressions come so near one another and brought out so vividly the unity that Indian literature bears within itself. All these saints who had hailed from various parts of India have raised a unanimous voice against a blind infatuation with the scriptures as the tradition had been before them. All of them have rejected Sanskrit and espoused the cause of the language of the people as the medium of expression. With Kabir, they have meant to say that while Sanskrit was the stagnant water of a well, the languages were the moving water of a river as it were. They have all flouted the barriers of caste and themselves hailed from all possible castes high and low. They have protested against the rigidities of the temples and the monasteries and risen much above the dualistic debates reducing religion almost to the level of an intellectual polemic and ignorant prejudice.

For the first time in the history of Orissa, it seems that in fifteenth century, the walls of isolation began to crumble down. Prior to it, the Orissa monarchs had traversed very far in their programmes of expansion by war. with emperor

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Ashoka and the Buddhism he propagated as the royal religion, Orissa did establish a link with the north but it benefited perhaps the empire more than it did the culture and the aspirations of the land. With the initiative and the attendant lures coming from an emperor who had just conquered their land the people as it were succumbed to the conversion in great haste and it was probably very much therefore that they got incorporated into it the idolatry and externalities of the Hindu creed with almost an equal haste. It resulted in a flowering of Vajrayāna architecture and erection of massive templesteads no doubt, but Orissa made itself also unable to assimilate into it any of the more permanent features and essences of the great message of the Buddha. Then came the philosopher ascetics from the south, each sticking to his own theoretical slant and out to win a victory over the others. They interfered more than they influenced, showed greater interest in winning the people to their sides than understanding them and helping them into a real life of the spirit. They came to conquer Puri, established their own monasteries, got the Kings' favour and unfurled their flags. These conquerers looked at Orissa as it were a part of their empire. Thus only in the fifteenth century there was a real contact, a real opening of the windows to the very essence of the great tradition, a real expanding out so that one can discover oneself in the context of the whole of which one was a part. It occasioned both a withdrawal and a return.

The process set in a simmer and resulted almost in a shaking of the very foundations. The appeal to

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go within also had its effects outside in the larger society and the saints took the lead in the entire process. Literature which they were instrumental in producing appeared in all its intents and purposes to have a mission, a spiritual mission, of rousing the people to themselves, of invoking a new inner atmosphere where every man could come in touch with the best in himself and also in others. The aspirations for which Śāralā Dāsa had laid a foundation reached dignified high in the writings of the Panchasakhā.

To start with, the Panchasakhā followed the path Śārala Dāsa had cut in Oriya literature as a pioneer, They rendered the sacred books of the Hindus into the people's language in order to make them available to the people. In fact they, exactly as Śaralā Dāsa had done, wrote them as original works, with the utmost sense of freedom, using the old themes as broad skeletons. The two foremost among them are the Jagamohana Ramāyana by Balarāma Dāsa and the Oriya Bhāgabata by Jagannātha Dās, the two that along with Śāralā Dāsa's Mahābhārata rank even to-day as the first three great books that the Oriyas have to their credit as a literature, To the two may be added Achyūtānanda Dāsa's Harivamsa. These books played a very commendable role in bringing the common fold of the people in direct contact with the cultural heritage of the country and opened their eyes to a new awareness and involvement.

The contemporary Brahmins, it will be easily understood, did not accept Jagannātha Dāsa's Oriya Bhagabata with much relish. The new production

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which was witten in a very simple metre and language, they were afraid, would surely drive the Sanskrit Bhāgabata out to disuse and thus they would lose on age-long profession of standing between the people and enlightenment into the great books. The Brāhmins condemned it as unreadable and even made complaints before the King and the court. Yet they could not tarnish in any way the worth of a book whose hour had now come. It was the time when Shri Chaitanya was already at Puri and he was a great admirer of Jagannātha Dāsa and his Oriya Bhāgabata. This may be one of the major reasons why the Brahmins did not succeed in their designs of defaming him before the King. The Oriya Bhāgabata even crossed the borders of Orissa in getting the approbation of all concened. It was very much used in some of the Bengali-speaking areas. It is said that even after one and a half century after Jagannātha Dāsa's Bhāgabata had seen the light, the translator of the Sanskrit original into Bengali did take the help of the Oriya version to be able to do his work.

THE INNER-DIRECTEDNESS THAT ACCEPTS ALL

The Panchasakhā were basically men of religious aspiration and realization. They did not as such condemn any particular way of *Sādhanā* in favour of their own way; but they were against all narrow and rigid adherance to any particular way. Their attitude behind all what they spoke and wrote was one of an all-accepting inner honesty and purity. The Panchasakhā were Vaishnavas, yet they were much more than those who close themselves into a sect called Vaishnava.

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They spoke and wrote about the necessity of Kāyāsādhanā, but they were not only Kāyāsādhakas. They were Buddhists in much of their avowals, yet not Buddhists as far as to be Buddhists meant following a particular sect and nothing else. They sang of and adored the Supreme Brahma, yet were much more than the doctrinair Adwaitins. They proclaimed that to remain engrossed with the impermanent and the only worldly was to live buried in *Māyā*, but they were not *Māyāvādins*. They were on the side of life, its enhancement and in its excellence in the full spiritual import of the term. Thus they could make a happy synthesis between *Sagūna* and *Nirgūna* by rising up to a height from which one could see both of these and also see beyond. As Achyūtananda speaks of it in one of his books. "All these forms are only creations of the One Formless and all manifestations of form will ultimately realize themselves in the Formless. Thus, one ought to be able to took at the two as one. Only by looking at the seemingly opposites with an attitude of equanimity, one can realize the whole range of Truth."

The Panchasakhā made no distinction between what have been known in the vocabulary of Indian *Sadhana* as *Pinda* and *Brahmānda*, the individual microcósm and the universal macrocosm. They made no distinction between the Ūpanisadic conception of the Brahma, the Supreme Truth, and the Buddhist conception of Śūnya. And what was more, like many of the medieval mystics in the country, they gave the whole concept a sense of palpability and proximity by calling it the Śunyapūrūsa. Scholars who have their

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own style of studying the *Sādhakas* in terms of sects and labels have claimed that the Panchasakhā were Buddhist Śunyavādins, but the real truth is they were neither Baūddhas nor Śunyavādins. They were not this and not that to suit our classification by labels. They were seekers who walked a way and did never quarrel over the ways. They were *Bhaktas* and *Jnānis* at the same time, because the real *Bhakta* and the real *Jnāni* does combine the two in the process of his becoming. They had gone beyond the areas of mere *Bhakti* or mere *Jnāna* and could look at both as one. To speak by using their metaphor : 'as the bird must have both its wings to be able to fly, the *Śādhaka* must have *Jnāna* and *Bhakti* in his schedule if he has to make any real advance in his *Śadhanā*.

The Panchasakhā literature is a very vast literature. Apart from the three transcreations mentioned above, they have left an enormous body of writings which are still so popular and go on inspiring the people. To name only the comparatively more important among them, Balarama Dasa has written the following books : Amarakoṣa Gita, Bedāntasāra, Gūptagitā, Brahmānda Bhūgola, Bata Abakāsa, Bhāba Samūdra and Lakshmi Pūrana. Besides the Oriya Ramayana, he has also made an Oriya rendering of the Śrimadbhagabadgita in *Chhāndas*, using the familiar song-forms of his time in each of the chapters. Jagannātha Dāsa's Oriya Bhāgabata still remains the most used and most valued book in Oriya literature. Besides that he has the following main books to his credit : Artha Koili,

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Tūḷābhinā, Dārūbrahma Gita and an Oriya translation of the Gita. Artha Koili is an attempt at giving a metaphysical interpretation of Markanda Dāsa's Kešaba Koili, a book which preceded the age. Achyūtānanda seems to be the most prolific writer among the Panchasakhā His writings include, besides the Harivamsa: Śūnya Samhitā, Gūrūbhakti Gita, Gopālanka Ogāla, Kaibarta Gita, Garūda Gita, Kalijūga Gita, Tattwabodhini, Brahmasankūli and Anākara Samhita. Many of his other books are yet to be published. The two major works that go by the name of Jašobanta Dāsa are Śibaswarodaya and Premabhakti Brahmagita. The Hetū ūdaya Bhāgabata is the only major work of Ananta Dāsa, now found in print. Three of them, Achyūtānanda Jasobanta and Ananta have also the Mālikās —speculations and predictions about the happenings of the future. Moreover, Balarāma and Jagannatha have samples of prose in a few of their writings of special interest to those who want to follow the stage by stage evolution of oriya prose form.

In Brahmānda Bhūgoḷa, Baḷarāma Dāsa has described the human body to be the seat of all beauties and excellences. All the possibilities lie hidden and suggested in the body itself. The body contains all the three worlds, -the heavens, the earth and the underworlds. Balarāma has located the entire complex of the temple of Jagannātha in the very same body, the twenty-two steps leading to the entrance as well as the sanctum sanctorum where the gods are seated. Thus, it is suggested, the body has to be

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able to deserve all that realization. The aspired-for goal and its realization are potentially there within us as possibilities in the very heart of our deepest endeavours. "The knowledge you seek for is stored in your heart. You have to find it there and realize it."—says Achyūtananda. Also again: "The knowledge of the Brahma, Brahmajnāna, is never far from you, it is inseparably contained in your own temple."

To seek, to aspire, to be earnest and genuine in seeking—that is the real key according to the Panchasakhā. All *Bhaktimārgas* have pointed at this basic truth, but all *Bhaktas* have not been honest about their pursuits. It was in no way different in the time of the Panchasakhā. Achyutānanda has warned about the various brands of these *Bhaktas*: There are *Bhaktas* who talk, *Bhaktas* who have always their bellies full, there are *Bhaktas* who are interested in the occult, *Bhaktas* who run about singing and dancing. Some *Bhaktas* have their marks and flags to be most prominently shown, and some have the sacred dust smeared all over the body. True *Bhakta* is he, who has introduced himself to God's Name; and the one who has actually seen and realized, is verily the best among the *Bhaktas*. There are also false Gūrūs, intent upon having a large army of disciples by easy intiation. These, according to Achyūtānanda are those who take one away from the real path of light and the acquaintance with it.

Thus, the most important thing on the path of spiritual realization is not having a particular way,

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exclusively as your own way, not even having a *Gūrū* to help you. The real thing is the aspirant's inner preparation, his willingness to become as the ascents demand one to be, to make your own mind into a real receptacle. "One has to find out oneself, the *Gūrū* can only suggest and guide."—is what the Panchasakhā have said. The mind is the Bhāgabata and the Gita according to them. The direction is, therefore, completely an inner direction, one has to go deeper and deeper in to meet the *Light* which is the cause of all what is and also the ultimate destiny of all.

A REINTERPRETATION OF SOCIETY

To go inside in the life of the spirit is also to expand oneself in terms of consciousness, to break down the separating wall between oneself and the all. Self-realization with the medieval saints of India was not a running away from the world to what is called to save one's own soul; it is being reborn egoless, so that you are able to look at the whole world in a different eye. you become a rebel because you want the relationships and arrangements of society to be determined anew. The Panchasakhā strove so much to elevate the status of the lowly-placed in society and wrote special books to make them feel equal to others and also indispensable for the total functioning of the society. It is not surprising that these saints and writers who proclaimed the same presence of God in every man did not find much justice in the contemporary caste society. And they had their own way of dealing with the problem in order to solve it.

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In a society where caste had gradually come to be looked upon as a divine dispensation as it were and its whole ethics was built securedly on that clever insinuation, the Panchasakhā declared themselves to be *Śudras*. In fact they belonged by birth to different castes in society, at least one of them was a Brāhmin; but became *Śudra* by choice. They had their own way of explaining the origins of caste as a system. To say it with Achyūtānanda again : all the four castes have been born out of the great luminousity of the Lord only. According to him, Vaishya is the eyes of God, Kshatriya His ears, the Brahmin is the very inhalation and exhalation of God and Śūdra represents His face. He says that though his father was a Kāyastha and his mother was a Kshatriya by birth, he belongs to neither of these categories, because he does neither of the functions intended for both of them. His real caste should therefore be determined according to his function in the society. He argues out his case in the following way ; The Śudra takes birth upon earth to act as a servant to the three other classes. Lord Jagannātha has made Himself manifest in this world in all the three eras in three different forms, I am His servant and thus I am a Śūdra too. I am nothing but a Śūdra, because I have the Śūdra attitude domina ting all others.

This will mean, the attitude or the inner dominant propensity is the true determinant. Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and the Śūdra, these do not stand for the four castes, they stand for the corresponding propensities. The one that is preponderant in a person will determine

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his real caste. The Śudra attitude is the attitude of service, it is the propensity to give oneself to be of use and to consecrate. This is how Achyūtānanda seems to have drawn a conclusion; "I have no desire to be a Brahmin, neither a Kshatriya nor a Vaishya. To be humble and low gives you a real sense of inner humility. That is why I have decided to be a Śūdra and nothing else." And again, "Only a Sudra is eligible for real service. A Sūdra has indeed very little scope to become egoistic while playing his roles. Genuine service and devotion make one worthy of the heavens and bring him to the feet of God.

It is clear that the traditional society of the time must have totally disapproved of this attitude at caste. The established order with the Brahmins at the highest rung must have very much opposed it They came forward with all sorts of measures to humiliate them. They argued, for example, that the Panchasakhā had to take recourse to an explanation like the above mainly because of their ignorance about the Sāstras. Grapes are sour to those who have not reached up to them, they pleaded. The Panchasakhā said in reply that they were of course well-versed in the Sāstras and the Sādhanas, but nevertheless they proclaimed themselves to be Sūdras because of a choice, in view of a special propensity they bore within them. They said they really wanted to be low and hence did not deem the Sūdra in any way different from them. They were servants at the feet of the Lord and thus could not discriminate between high and low and chose to be Sūdras. They very

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categorically announced that they were not Brahmins, neither Vaishyas, nor Kshatriyas.

This reads very well together with the medieval saints in literature all over India. The Dāsas of Karnataka also flouted all caste distinctions. A person, once he places himself on the path of God-realization, has no more any need for a caste, no need to be high or low. This is a proper context upon which we shall try to assess the scope of the Panchasakhā's attainment and works and to trace out the way and attitude which is so uniquely theirs. Achyūtananda has referred to the four stages of Bhakti following one another in an ascending order as it were. He explains, the first attitude in the whole process of a *Bhakta's* evolution is the Kshatriya attitude. At this stage, he destroys his lower nature and puts an end to the many hostile elements within him that keep him stuck and staggering. At the second stage of the evolution, the *Bhakta* goes out for commerce with the further stages of his development as a Vaishya with the name of Krishna, the Lord, as his capital. As the second phase becomes stable, the *Bhakta* takes to the propensities of a Brahmin and performs all the rituals and the attendant paraphernalia and thus comes to realize what the path of a knower of Brahma is ordained to be. Realizing the Brahma and thus knowing Him in His real essence, he becomes a servant at His feet. This is the fourth and the last station, the station of the Śūdra, which ultimately makes the aspirant stable and sure in the path of *Bhakti*.

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Thus, in terms of experience and fulfilment, the *Sūdra bhakti* is bhakti at its summit, *bhakti* that can sustain itself without faltering and also sustain the adherent *Bhakta* on his onward path. It may also be submitted that, during the first three stages, *Bhakti* remains in the religious level and makes allowances for the necessary religiousities, but at the last level of the Sūdrabhakti type, it is elevated to the spiritual plane and the *Brahmadarśin* fulfils himself by becoming a *Dāsa* of the Lord. He does His work in whatever he does and thus dwells constantly in Him. The course of his evolutionary *sādhanā* touches all the areas of his life, saturates it completely and becomes transformed into an act of total consecration and service. A Dāsa, in the words of Achyutānanda is verily one who has a right initiation into the Name and the Truth of God; he verily knows the Truth in himself. He truly is the *Brahmadarśin.*

The word Vaisnava is a long known word in Orissa. Almost all the Vaishnava scholar-saints of South India had come to Puri and had left distinct imprints of their paths on the religious life of Orissa. Much prior to that, the Alwar Vaishnavism of the Tamil country that flourished there for about five hundred years in the first millennium, had also travelled north as far as Orissa and one of the principal monasteries now at Puri bears clear testimony to it. Whatever the great poet Jayade'va's actual birthplace may be and even if we assume that there have been more than one Jayade'vas, it has to be admitted that Jayade'va, the poet of the Gitagobinda fame was very much associated with the

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temple of Puri and that the book has been traditionally sung before the deity of this temple as a part of its regular schedule. There have been translations of the Gitagovinda into Oriya during the subsequent centuries, sometimes faithfullv following the origional in its erotic elabration and also sometimes making some departure in the interpretation to give the whole thing a predominantly metaphysical look. But as explorations made up till now indicate, though Gitagobinda as a single work in erotic adoration has occupied so much place in the literary tradition of Orissa through the centuries after the poet, one does not find another work of the same category in Orissa which could prove that Jayade'va really represented a whole trend or something of the sort. Yet more strange is the fact that the main temples of Orissa which were built after Jayade'va's time do not have a sculpture that depicts the theme of Rādhā and Krishn.

PANCHASAKHĀ AND SHRI CHAITANYA

Pratāparūdra De'va was the ruler of Orissa when Shri Chaitanya came to the land and had his *Lilā* at Puri. It did not take much time before the ruler became an admirer and disciple of Shri Chaitanya. The entourage of disciples that came with Chaitanya from Bengal were the Gaudiya vaishnavas and they looked upon the master as *sachala Jagannātha* or the living Lord in contrast to the deity inside the Puri temple who was immobile and innert as any deity could be. With thus the deification of Chaitanya and

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the king himself becoming a convert, these is no doubt that the new wind gathered momentum and could register many followers. In Orissa, in its spheres of spiriturl life and of literature, it was the time of the Panchasakhā. It is said that by the time Shri Chaitanya came to Orissa, the writing of the Oriya Rāmāyana and Oriya Bhāgabata had been complete. People were intimately acquainted with a Vaishnavism that had developed a special trait of it own built out of the various trends of worship in Orissa traditionally evolved and accepted Jagannātha as its presiding deity. The *Gaudiyas* for several reasons could not recognize this Oriya vaishnavism on its own. They even did not accept Jagannātha Dāsa's Oriya Bhāgabata as an authentic religious text because of the latter's many variations and departures from the Sanskrit original. They smelled a tinge of Māyābāda in it and in all probability it was the Gaudiya vaishnava camp which characterized the Panchaskha and other Oriya Vaishnavas as the *Prachhanna Baūdhas*, or *Buddists* under a guise. The *Gaudiyas*, as is suggested from their most used texts, had a sense of disdain for the Buddhists and often equated the latter with the Śabaras, Mle'chhas and the Pūlindas. It is possible that they saw at least some reasons to extend this same attitude towards the Panchasakhā and the Orissa s hool of Vaishnavas.

Shri Chaitanya had come to be looked upon as an incarnation of God by his followers even during his life-hime. For them, he was no other than Lord Krishna Himself who has assumed a birth at

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Nabadwipa for the redemption of the faithful. In Kabikarnapūra's 'Chaitanyachandrodaya', Shri Chaitanya and Jagannātha, in mutual contrast as it were have been described as *Narabrahma* and *Darūbrahma* respectively, meaning Brahma in the form of a human person and Brahma in the form of wood. All this is in refererce to the story of a parting of the ways between the Gaudiyas and the Orissa Vaishnavas, described in Dibakara Dāsa's "Jagannātha Charitamrita", a book, called to be the very first biography in Oriya literature, which was written shortly after the time of the Panchaskhā. Dibākara Dāsa says that though the Panchasakhā had all proclaimed themselves to be disciples of Shri Chaitanya, there was a sort of a rift between the Gaudiya and the Orissa camps. It was Shri Chaitanya who had bestowed the title of *Atibadi* on Jagannātha Das, the writer of the Oriya Bhāgabata, in recognition of his great talents and abilities, though the *Gaudiya* sect even to-day does not admit it as a true fact. Suspecting that the master is showing special favour and affection towards the Oriya Vaishnavas, the Gaudiya camp, as Dibākara's story goes, became intolerant They gave vent to their hurt feelings before the master who would not go by them. The whole thing seems to have reached a climax when the Gaudiya followers left Puri first for Jajpur and ultimately for Brundavana, leaving back Shri Chaitanya to be at Puri till his death.

Shri Chaitanya, when he was stayig at Puri with the entire Gaudiya camp, did nothing which would

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disturb or enrage the established traditions of society. He never opened his mouth against the regime of the priestcraft in the Puri temple. The *Gaudiyas* also strictly followed the injunctions of caste so as not to displease the conventional order. Those of his disciples from Bengal who had belonged to the fallen castes before they entered the Vaishnava fold had to stay at different places at Puri and never with the rest. Jabana Haridāsa, a disciple of Shri Chaitanya who had been a muslim, is a case in point. Rūpa and Sanātana, because they had lived in the court of the muslim rulers in Bengal and had thus defiled themselves also lived with Jabana Haridāsa. These had no permission to enter the sacred Jagannātha temple. It may be guessed that Chaitanya had taken these necessary precautions mainly not to displease the priests in any way. The Panchasakhā were openly against all caste considerations. With no qualm in their conscience they had voluntarily declared themselves to be the lowest in society. They had declared that they had the Śūdra propensity as the determining propensity and thus they were nothing but Sūdras.

Doing this, the Panchasakhā gave a new connotation to the very concept Śūdra and had declared the highest form of *Bhaki* to be Śū*drabhakti.* They did it not at all to replace the Brahmin by the Śūdra in the former's place nor to assert that the Śūdra occupied a higher place than the Brahmin. They explained the Śūdra as a symbol of the *Sūdrabhāva* and suggested that every aspirant after God-realization aspiring for the highest attainment had also to be a possessor of this Śū*drabhāva.*

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The Gaudiya Vaishnavas of course were very much in the good books of the king and could make very neatly the necessary adaptations, but they were very far from this Śūdrabhâva. They took all care to possess the ground here by winning over the ruler to their side, yet they continued to be very much out of roots here. Sanskrit language, like the *Pundits* of the time, was of course their first love. Even while propagating their way in Orissa, they also propagated the imported Bengali *Kirtans*. The Gaudiya Vaishnavas in Orissa even to-day have stuck to these as a sacred practice. Oriya, as a language of congregational communication, still remains outside their purview.

In the vaishnavism of the Panchasakhā, both Krishna and Râdhā had a place for each. It was broad and spacious enough to have room for so many things ranging from Śūnyapūrūsa to Lord Jagannātha. But they had conceived of these two objects of adoration as linked with the Indian great tradition upon a metaphysical context. The one Supreme Truth that has given birth to the two concepts of Being and Consciousness, Pūrūṣa and Prakriti as well as Krushna and Rādhā was never lost sight of by them, even when they seemed to celebrate and sing of the particulars. They looked upon both these concepts as the two modes as it were within the indivisible larger ever circle that the Supreme Truth stood for. In Śūnya Samhita, Achyūtānanda. seems to fix a relationship which takes Rādhā to be the individual soul and Krishna as its Universal and Transcendent counterpart. This was perhaps the original conception. Shri Chaitanya, it is said, wanted essentially to evoke

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what he calls this Vaishnaviśakti to the forefront of the consciousness of his time. It is also said that modifications have crept in as the movement assumed its popular roles and specially after the demise of the master. The Gaudiya Vaishnava philosophy has a conception of Nityarāsa, or the state of perpetual play by the Lord in His divine ultimate state. Achyūtānanda, it is interesting to note, has also a small book written by him under the same caption. According to the description of that book, at the place of the Nityarāsa, there is no day and no night, no self and no other; it is beyond all the possible conception of the deities and even the four aspects of the theophanic details of the Jagannātha institution represented in the four deities of Jagannāth, Balabhadra, Subhadrā and Sūdarśana are liquidated there into a single form only. It is there where, Achyūtānanda says, you meet the *Debanāśana bata,* the symbolic banyan which proclaims the elimination of all gods. All these gods and deities have their birth from there and there also they disappear into its embrace when they have finished playing their part. There, at that place of bliss you have the thousand-petalled-lotus in full bloom and on that lotus is the seat of Nityarādhikā or the eternal Rādhā. This thousand petalled-lotus is at the apex of the tantric Sâdhanā along the *Chakras* and the aspirant who reaches it attains the seat of the universal Śakti and fulfils himself. Achyūtānanda goes yet a step further and places the Supreme Pūrūsa or Krishna above the seat of Rādhā. There, where the nectar of the three passages of Gangā, Jamūnā and Saraswati falls upon Rādhā's breasts, there

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is where Krishna lies hidden and intended. All the sixteen thousand *Gopis* along with Tripūrā serve there at His feet. The thousand petalled-lotus is nothing other than the *Ūlata Brūdābana*. There, Lord Krishna has put his feet upon Rādhā's body, He is also described as having stationed Himself in a posture of sitting on Rādhā's waist.

In other words, after the aspirant reaches the lotus at the summit, he first gets a *Darsan* of Nitya Rādhā and further crosses over to realize what Achyūtānanda has called the Anādi Krishna. This may give an idea about the special character of the tantric and vaishnavic *Sādhanā* of Orissa. To transcend the *Paramā Prakriti* to attain the Supreme Pūrūsa who is not determined by the sexes,—this is to be able to witness the *Nityarāhāsa*. Oriya vaishnavism, it seems, has taken the word Rāsa from the Gaudiya vaiṣhnavas and has made an attempt to point out to the real roots. The Oriya Vaishnavas have never accepted Rādhā in the same dimensions and connotation the Gaudiyas have appeared to have given her. The 'Kapatapāshā' of Bhimā Dhibara, almost a contemporary of the Panchasakhā, has Rūkmini and Satyabhāmā by the side of Shrikrishna in stead of Rādhā. In the Oriya Bhāgabata of Jagānnātha Dāsa, Brindābati and not Rādhā, has been acclaimed as the *Gopi* nearest to him. Achyūtānanda has a conception of Anādi Krishna as a further step after Nitya Rādhā. Even after the Gaudiya predominance was very much in Orissa after the Panchasakhā, poet Dinakrishna Dāsa towards the end of the 17th century has through the allusion of a story conceived of a

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Nirākāra Hari as the highest in comparison with whom Mānava Krishna is only a powerless half-god who cannot have any access to the former.

The Oriya converts to Gaudiya Vaishnavism have generally composed there *padas* in Brajaboli and Bengali. The tradition starts right from Shri Rāmānanda Pattanayak who was a high official under Prataparūdra stationed at Rajamahendri and who has been said to have explained the tenets of *premabhakti* in all its thematic details to Shri Chaitanya during the latter's sojourn in the south. Ramananda after that joined Chaitanya as Rai Rāmānanda and became famous for his Sanskrit drama 'Shri Jagannāth Ballabha.' Ramananda and the other converts did not write as a rule in Oriya not because they did not know the language, but because the language of the master was deemed as it were by a consensus by his followers as a sacred language and therefore the only language of expression. It was in the very tradition of the Indian religious establishment to look at the language of the religious books as a sacred language and keep it away from the spoken and hence thought to have been polluted language of a people, Sanskrit has been on that claim called a language of the gods, the *Girbāna bhāsā* as has been described in a certain age in Karnataka. The Vaishnaba Kirtanas that came with Shri Chaitanya and his camp from Bengal must have aroused some sort of the same awe with the Oriya converts to the new way and thus must have inspired the poets in them to write not in Oriya but in Bengali. The whole tendency must have been very much appreciated by those who had come from Bengal. The

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latter must have felt somewhat compensated in view of their anger at Jagannātha Dāsa's Bhāgabata when they would have seen the Oriya converts to their fold perspiring to write in Bengali. Some of the Oriya Gaudiya Vaishnavas who have at all written, including *M*ādhabi Dāsi and Sālabeg, have written in three languages, Oriya, Bengali and Brajaboli. Since then onward, it is really interesting to see some other Oriya poets have also felt an inspiration to be tempted to write in Bengali to show perhaps that they were capable of another achievement also. Bhima Bhoi, a poet of nineteenth century Orissā has to his credit a whole manuscript called 'Mahimā Binoda' which he has written is broken Bengali Shri Radhanātha Roy, almost of the same time and from whom the modern phase of Oriya poetry is said to have started also began with writing poems in Bengali and got them published. One can still come across a tendency in some to write in English even to-day. The enthusiasm of these to write in English can perhaps be very well compared with that of the Oriya Gaudiya Vaishnavas. of the 16th century to write in Bengali and to feel a sense of special pride by doing that

Shri Chaitanya had come to Orissa, the original home of his ancestors, to propagate his variety of the vaishnava faith in Orissa. As he came in contact with the long vaishnava tradition of the Jagannātha Kshe'tra at Puri, he seems to have begun to have heen deeply touched with it and stayed on here till his last. But his followers seemed to move further and further away from him, the rulers and their like in Orissa were also

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gradually overtaken by the new surge and began to lose their moorings. The special brand of *pre'mabhakti* that was once so ostentatiously propounded by Jayade'va and that Shri Rāmānanda Roy has been described to have so lucidly explained to Shri Chaitanya so as to convince the latter about its superiority to other paths of bhakti had not been nevertheless very much accepted in Orissa in spite of all that. But it is interesting to see that for the next almost three centuries it took advantage of the general decadence of the time and inspired as a theme nearly the entire bulk of Oriya poetry-making. It is a phase in itself and demands a separate treatment. *Pre'mabhakti* got itself degenerated into bare erotic and ornamental poetry and before long became court poetry also. From the point of view of literature in relation to a people and the totality that its life stands for, it was a sort of regression. It was as it were half a step from *Pre'mabhakti* to *Kāmabhakti* which was for all intents and purposes cent per cent *Kāma* with a mask of *bhakti*. The gods were dragged down to the pits where frustrated men were intoxicated with *Kāma* and wanted to believe that they had not really lost anything at all. The pomposities in literature only suggested neverthcless a poverty that had gone very deep into the heart of a people. When there is darkness all round, some people try to deny it by appearing pompous and snug.

King Pratāparūdra had accepted Shri Chaitanya as his Gūrū. The latter had also made Pūrūsottama his permanent abode as long as he remained in his mortal

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body. As the great master got more and more wide and deep into the Vaishnava way, it seemed he got himself liberated more and more from the bounds of the Gaudiya sect. But on the other side, the sect was evolving in a way to appear more and more exclusive. The king was on their side and the priests took them to be more acceptable than the Oriya Vaishnavas. As political Orissa began to dismantle in the middle of the sixteenth century and was divided into petty bragging islands where the minor chiefs each imagined themselves to be the brightest sun ever possible on earth, Gaudiya vaishnavism got also the patronage of these courts and caught grandness and brilliance. Though the real roots were no longer there, the externalities were given a grandiloquent shine, All these kings became vaishnavas and in the process the spirit of the entire way was lost and gloss came to rule, also in the realm of literature.

IN THF LINE OF THE SAINTS

The spread worked as a scourge as far as the other stream, that of Oriya vaishnavism was concerned. After the demise of Shri Chaitanya, the only element that had acted as a link and a bridge between the king and the Gaudiyas on one side and Orissa Vaishnavism on the other was no longer there. After the Panchasakhā, there was no real leadership on the side of the latter. All the winds seemed favourable for the former, which gradually took possession of the whole horizon and the contaminations were already felt in the realms also of the literature and culture of Orissa and the total

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world-view of its people. The tradition of the saints came to be on the wane, it was forced to withdraw itself to the background. Till it had a return in the middle of the nineteenth century in the form of Mahimādharma, the period of the withdrawal continued. The period lasted for three centuries. It must be kept in mind that the reason for all this was more the lack of a real leadership than all the other hostile circumstances and factors. A real leadership often acts as a centre which keeps the parts together and whole. Otherwise they tend to fall apart. After the Panchasakha, the house they had built likewise fell to pieces. The body of the saints also became divided into small sects and paths, maximizing the minor points of difference and each Gūrū, magnifying his own point of view in the total rhetoric. Yet a tradition did continue.

Of all the legion of writings now obtained of this period of withdrawal of the Orissan saint tradition a large proportion of it belongs to the particular groups and orders and has been written for the respective followers only. The saints who came afrer the Panchasakhā also in most cases physically withdrew into the forests, hills and caves and preferred waiting as it were for the proper hour to come again. The saint tradition tends now to become more conscious about its own existence and hence outwardly more and more rigid, most probably to be able to continue in spite of the inroads and spread impacts of the other faith being patronized by the courts and hence upheld by the majority in the rank and file. The names of saints worth a mention from this period are Chaitanya Dāsa, Dwārika

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Dâsa, Arakshita Dāsa and Debānanda Dāsa. To say it in terms of the writings, they are : "Nirgūṇa Māhatmya" and "Bishnūgarbha Purāna" by Chaitanya Dāsa, "Parache' Gita" of Dwarikā Dāsa, "Mahimandaḷa Gita" of Arakshita Dāsa and "Baichandra Gita" of Debānanda Dāsa. A special mention as a reference to the times may be made of Nanda Dāsa (end of 16th century) who has a book "Aṇākāra Samhitā" in his name. It seems, the author did not use his full name to prove his authorship and had to omit the first two letters of his real name in order to perhaps evade the displeasure of the court Vaishnavas. Chaitanyā Dāsa, in spite of what his name may suggest, belonged to the remote western tracts of the Oriya language-speaking area and in all probabilities had not come in so much contact with the impacts of Gaudiya Vaishnavism that was more or less confined to the coastal area with a few outskrits. Dwarikā Dāsa also belonged to the 16th century. He thought he was Baḷarāma Dāsa of the Oriya Rāmāyana fame in his previous birth. Besides the Parache' Gita he also added a twelfth book to the already existing eleven parts of the Oriya Bhāgabata written by Jagannātha Dāsa. Arakshita Dāsa (b. 1772) was in many respects a king among the saints. Born actually in a royal family in South Orissa he renounced the world, came wandering to Puri only to be persecuted and then finally had built a seat for himself in a cave on a hillock in the district of Cuttack. He writes in the same powerful vein as some of the writings of the Panchaskhā once represented before him and at times even excels them in the depth of meaning and expression. The Mahimandaḷa Gitā

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has one of its more than ninety chapters written in prose, which is simple, has an immensity and depth, and bears a style that is more literary than archaic. Debānanda Dāsa in his Baichandra Gita has Rama as his presiding deity, and in the pages of the book, it is Rama who asks questions and is replied to by Basiṡtha. Another book written shortly after the Panchasakhā period is Iswara Dāsa's 'Chaitanya Bhāgabata'. This is the only book of its kind and its time, which has dealt both with Gaudiya Vaishnavism as well as the life of Panchasakhā. As a contrast, most of the accounts given by Bengali writers of the period have not mentioned the Panchasakhā at all in their treatment of Shri Chaitanya's activities at Puri. Even the Oriya writers who as Vaishnavas, took to the Gaudiya fold describe their themes upon a set where the Panchasakhā do not exist. Achyutananda and Jasobanta among the Panchasakhā have written with so much fervour about their contacts with and initiation from Shri Chaitanya that it is not possible to historically dissociate them from the latter.

Thus there has been a sort of a blind spot in the field of the study of this period and sectarian animosities seemed to hold the most decisive sway. Iswara Dāsa's Chaitanya Bhagabata indeed came very much to the rescue upon a context like this and threw some light on so many obscurities. The manuscript appeared in print only very recently and thus made possible a new fresh look at the whole episode.

THE SAINTS AND THE KING

The Panchasakhā were saints, and as saints everywhere, they also wrote; and as saints everywhere

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and in every age, theirs was a vein of protest, of reform and of change. The Panchasakhā were anything but conformists. They went against the accepted modes of the time in many a respect. This brought persecution in its wake and they took it upon themselves on more than one occasion. The conflict with the powers that be was mainly on two principal scores : they stuck to writing in Oriya and would not submit to the accepted e'lite belief that things sacred could be expressed only in Sanskrit. The second stake was their rising above the caste arrangements of the society and the resultant exploitations. It was of course no less than a hero's job to pronounce without any pretence on the part of the Panchasakhā that they were nothing else but Śūdras irrespective of what caste the social codes then in vogue ascribed to them by virtue of their birth. There are clear evidences from several writings of the Panchasakhā that they were taken to task for having transgressed the accepted mores, at least in the writings of Achyūtānanda Dāsa and Baḷarāma Dāsa.

It has been narrated by Baḷarāma Das in the introduction to his Oriya translation of the Bhagabad-gitā that when he was quite young, he once happened to be in the temple. A learned assembly was to take place to discuss subtle things on religion and philosophy. But as a rule, only the Brahmins, scholars for that matter, were allowed to participate. The only exception to the rule was of course the king who could be within the temple premises when such an assembly took place. Baḷarāma had a mischievous idea in his mind, inquisitive

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as he was, to stay on even if he was not a Brahmin himself and listen to the wise discourse. He got himself into the assembly in the guise of a Brahmin and listened to the scholars and the *pundits* each pleading for their own point of view on philosophical matters as enunciated in the scriptures. The interpretations varied and there was a difference of opinion. Disagreements led to a stalemate as it were and it seemed there was no way out. The young Baḷarāma felt a temptation, took courage and stood up to answer. In his own way he did give a solution out of the problem. All concerned were very happy for thus having been helped out, but none of the *Pundits* knew personally the person who had spoken. He, it transpired, was not one of the official participants and worse still, he was not a Brahmin. He was indeed a transgressor.

Thus, instead of being grateful to him, the angry dupes of a tradition took Baḷarumā Dāsa to the king. The latter also reprimanded him by saying that it was not within his rights not being a Brahmin to have thus stealthily got into the assembly of scholars and spoken when he had no right to speak. Balarāma said in reply that in a discourse on God, it could not be a monopoly of the Brahmins to speak and that everyone who felt he had an answer could also give his view. That was too much to be spoken before a king and he took it for an act of insubordination. Baḷarāma had also submitted that, with the grace of God, any ignoramus was competent enough to speak and express what the right knowledge of God really was. This statement should

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have been beyond the grasp of the king who was the custodian of the old tradition and hence he ordered Baḷarāma to be thrown into prison in the temple itself. It was commanded to him that he should be able to make the sacred Gita said through the mouth of an untouchable and that only will prove his claim. Balarama spent the night alone with God as his only way out and prayed to Him so that he may get out of the sad situation. In the morning when the king was in the temple to have the test played through, Balarama submitted before him that as no untouchable would be allowed to enter the temple, he was ready to recite the Gita in the form of Oriya *Chhāndas* as he had composed them on the night before. He did as he said and surprised the whole assembly including the king. The incident suggested two victories on a single occasion and smashed two myths. The one was that only Brahmins were able to interpret the scriptures and the second was that it was not necessary that the scriptures could be only in the Sanskrit language. They could be expressed in the very language of the people and no sacrilege was really committed if someone did that.

The second incident has been narrated by Baḷarāma Dāsa himself in a work of his, which he has named Bhābasamūdra. Bhābasamūdra is of course nothing but a story written in the form of simple poetry, but it does have a definite suggestion to make to give us an idea of the climate the Panchasakhā had to grapple with in their roles as writers and religious leaders. The scene brings us to Puri again and to a time of the famous car

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festival. The deities were on their respective cars which were about to start with their schedule of the annual march out of the temple. As the custom had it, only a selected group of Brahmins were allowed to go up to the platform of the cars, in the centre of which the gods had been seated on the pedestal. All others had to satisfy themselves from a distance, from below, standing on the street. Baḷarāma Dāsa, the story goes, wanted to have a close look at the deities from upon the platform itself and hence he had clandestinely got up to one of the cars with that end in his mind. The priests soon detected him and wanted that he should step down and otherwise the consequence would be severe. Baḷarāma insisted to be where he was and not willing to get down from the car.

He was given a thorough beating by the Brāhmins on the car and was physically thrown out of it to where his real place was as a lay man. That was both painful and humiliating, and Balarāma was perhaps too sensitive to bear it. With the injury and the humiliation, he left the place and went straight to the sea beach, with a heart completely broken down, because he had been so forsaken and disgraced before the very eyes of the deities. It was as if the very pillars of his faith in the Great Lord had been shaken to their foundations. The *bhakta* wanted to test and see whose possession the deity really was and who had a greater claim upon it. In the same mood Balarāma drew three chariots with sand on the beach and poured his heart's agony upon them to invoke the deities to be present

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there. The thing really happened and the deities are said to have been there with their presences that the scheduled chariots of the festival out there on the streets would not move. It was a real crisis and all efforts at pulling them forward on their way were in vain. All the people concerned gave up and retired as evening approached and nothing could be done for the night. At night Lord Jagannātha appeared before the king in his dream and appraised him with what had happened. He revealed that an insult to his *Bhakta* was as well as insult to Him also and therefore the deities were where the *Bhakta* had invoked them to be, on the chariots drawn on the sand by the sea. The only remedy was to go to him, apologise to him for the dishonour done to him. Only when these amends have been made, the voice warned, the chariots would move again.

Next day, things were done exactly as ordered by the Lord and the chariots did move. Bhābasamūdra remains to be among the first specimens of poetry written in those days, so charged with sincerity and pathos, though it gives one an example of *Bhakti* becoming somewhat obtrusive to force itself upon God and get the results, Nevertheless the point remains that the Panchasakhā did not have a good time at Puri because the king was always on the side of the tradition. In whatever they uttered and wrote, they voiced something which was so much against the accepted patterns and it must have called for much courage to stand against the wind. As saints, meaning people who had made their beliefs a part of their life, the Panchasakhā did have that courage of conviction.

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And thus their religion was never a business that they did in their solitariness and lived at a separate expedient level outside that business. That is why all that they wrote, had more courage and conviction in them than mere scholasticity and theological sport. The literature they were thus able to produce was not mere literature, to be read and enjoyed, it had an appeal to every aspiring soul, to all who wanted to grow, to live and to be genuine. The Panchasakhā had a deep sense of identity with a scheme of values, at once both mundane and sacred, and it had an innocence of expression that went straight to everybody's heart and could move in him the best he had in him, making him thereby more and more ready for a life of consecration. The literature that intends to do that is of course at a much higher and more courageous level than literature that merely entertains, merely exhilarates you for a time and then leaves you condemned where you were.

The language Panchasakhā used, gave new wings to Oriya as a language. The Panchasakhā thus completed the process which had been started by Śāralā Dāsa, the writer of the Oriya Mahābhārata. Because of being abhorred by the *Pundits* who wrote only in the medium of Sanskrit, Oriya must have been poor and unequipped as a language, condemned to be spoken by people who lay in the socially inferior rungs. Both Śaralā Dāsa and the Panchasakhā had drunk deep into the wealth of Sanskrit and the great tradition of which it had been a vehicle. But they had also a deep love for the spoken

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language of the people with its store of vocabulary which was a taboo for the so-called learned ones. They brought the two elements together into a living whole and produced a language that was full of life, chaste and rich. The traditional privilege of the spoken languages has always been that they can incorporate into them words and idioms of the Sanskrit tongue, but the latter has always remained unfortunate as it were in the sense that it had stood aloof and isolated, unable to take anything from the languages with which it had an inevitable contact. The reasons of course have been more social than linguistic.

As far as reading and appreciation of literature are concerned, the largest bulk of the people in Orissa are still with the Panchasakhā. It to true that they too do not understand literally a major portion of what the saint writers have written, especially the technical details of the philosophical discussions and sādhanā. Yet there is something in these writings that is embedded in the great tradition of the total culture of this country and also at once in the collective unconscious of the general rank of the people and it is especially that which appeals to them and with which they are so much at home. Even in case of the comparatively more special books, primarily meant for the initiate like the Śūnya Saṁhitā, Brahmānda Bhūgoḷa or the Mahimandala Gitā, the ordinary readers do not care for the esoteric meanings, yet are quite able to appreciate the authenticity and straightness of approach expressed therein. These books inspire more than they inform; they do not further entrammel you with the so-calleP

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serious things sophisticatedly told by some special people called men of literature. They bring you as it were face to face with the task of your own transformation and seek to involve you with the most intimate and therefore the most precious in you. Saints have always appealed to the heart than to the head, and stood nearest to life and its surest roots than the special so-called men of literature. Even when our whole society will be modern in the most up-to-date sense of the term, when everyone in society will have access to the amenities and to knowledge, even then it will be somthing like a rediscovering of the most dependable values, a coming back home and a reassessment of our condition on the context of the real values as applied to and tested through living. It wil also be a time when we shall rediscover our saints, review them with a new and a more total light, and look at them with a new perspective.

Upon these contexts, the Panchasakhā were nothing less than revolutionries. They wanted to change so much in the society in which they moved and had their being. They strove so much to remove the barrier that traditionally separated man from man and society from society. They had an aspiration to restructure society on the context of a real relationship between man and man, of a spiritual relationship that binds man with man with the real bond at the very roots. The Panchasakhā in Orissa represent that mighty and catalysing minority within the history of Indian religion who said that we must change the here and the how if we really desired a liberation and that

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liberation did never mean an escape from the challenge that living signifies. The Panchasakhā did not believe in authority as an agent of change. They believed in change by an inner conviction and conversion. They looked at man as wholly as possible, not in fragments that has often been the style among the smarter e'lite through the ages. They did not want to liquidate the past; they really could take up the best that was in Indian heritage expressed through the various strands; they did not want to sink down with that heritage as many so often have loved to do. They swam on it and hence could point out, in a diction and grammar that was intelligible to and in keeping with their age, to the new horizons of realization both here and there which could be ours if we hearkened. They were, as usual, condemned by authority but accepted as their very own by the people, the innocent and the unsophisticated, the virgin as it has been called by the mystics all over the world.

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THE THREE CENTURIES OF ORNAMENTING ZEAL

After Pratāparūdra Deva, who died in 1534, the story of the dynasties and chiefs that ruled Orissa was soon to become a story of assassinations and intrigues. Any one who aspired for the throne seemed to think as a rule that he had to kill all the other rival aspirants before he could achieve his goal. This too did not have to last for a very long time. The whole kingdom that the Solars had built by wars and conquests dismantled till it was conquered by the Muslims from the north as well as from the south. The residue of the kingship that had thus fallen from grace was split up into tiny principalities and petty representatives of the royal line were the rulers there. These rulers, small both in stature and in power as they were, fancied themselves to be universal monarchs and ruled their respective pockets with great gusto. There flourished in the courts of these rulers a literature which ultimately became so prolific and elaborate that it has now come to characterize a whole era in the total body of Oriya literature. The trend ruled for about three centuries, from 1550 to 1850, though more precisely said, they had had their beginnings much before that and did extend to prevail upon in later years also. But its dominating period can be fixed

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to be stretching over the three centuries referred to above.

THE THREE STRANDS.

There are three main strands along which Oriya literature expressed itself after the age of the Panchasakhā. The first is the *nirguna* tradition of the Panchasakhā itself. The latter had left a band of followers and also a tradition of writing and aspiring that had percolated deep in the life of the population and continued to flourish and persist in the seats the masters had themselves established during their time. But, as royal patronization was available somewhere else and as persecution by the majority camp became more and more pronounced with the full support of the rulers, the upholders of the tradition, mainly the writer-saints gradually withdrew into hills and forests, into oblivion as it were. Without a centre and without the proper leadership, there came isolation and absence of contact. This led to the formation of the various orders round the gurus. Rigidities were encouraged and ritualism became the style. The representatives of the *nirguna* tradition after the Panchasakhā have been referred to before. Even in order to exist and survive, they had to make compromises. The voice of protest tended to become feebler and nonconformity was deemed full of risk. Perhaps their most dependable insignia was Jagannātha, of whom they sang and wrote, but reducing him more and more to the status of a mere deity to be worshipped. The symbolic significance of

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Jagannātha as assumed in the *Sadhana* of the Panchasakhā was no longer there. Its link with the great tradition also was gradually out of the grips. The seat of the Lord of the world became now predominantly a place of pilgrimage where one could come to pay one's homage to get all sorts of worldly success and gain in return.

The next was the camp that followed the Gaudiya footsteps Its lines were more or less fixed and the adherents were the official vaishnavas because the rulers more often than not happend to be on their side. That itself was an advantage and a drawback. It was an advantage in the sense that it got them easy followership and conspicuous popularity. It was a drawback in that it slackened them in the realm of that inner spiritual growth that keeps one evolving and ever aspiring. A sort of flabbiness set in and with it also a self-defeating over belief that this was the only true way. In his own time, Chaitanya had come as a rebel, in all probability he also remained a rebel till his last days even at the risk of being deserted by his followers. He was made heartlessly into a god and the message came to become mainly a monstic and thisworldly affair. The writers who wrote as henchmen of this camp brought in a sort of religious fervour that sought more to keep pacified and content than to really move. The works they produced often seemed to be expounding a formula which could give one all the bliss and all the happiness one really craved for in life. An expample of this sort was perhaps Śrihari Dāsa's 'Mayūrachandrikā' where the

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author has declared Chaitanya and Ray Rāmānanda to be his gūrūs The description gives an impression that he was one of their contemporaries. Following the usual explanation, Śrihari has of course described Rādhā and Krishna as the original Prakriti and Pūrūṣa, as the mother and the father of all on earth.

The third trend includes those who brought the Vaishnaba inspiration to the realm of the *Kāvyas*. As one goes through their works, one is persuaded to believe that a great horde of these writers were essentially Kavyakaras, the makers of *Kavya* and that they used the Vaishnava archetypes only as expedients and a medium of expression. To use the gods and the religions they personifield in the pursuit of the sport that was called *Kavya* and literature in general was long in the tradition in Orissa. The huge heritage of Sanskrit poetics, the science of ornamentation in poetry which was almost its entire scope, came very much to the rescue of these writers. Ornamentation in poetry shows more than it suggests, and hence, contradictorily enough, it conceals more than it claims to reveal. It mercilessly does away with the nuances which really carry the essence of a poetic theme. And when there is not much theme which you want to present and share with others, you begin and also finish up with ornamentation only and show more than you actually speak. One wonders how the poets who professed the Vaishnava religion could get hold of this ornamentalistic style in poetry-making and combine the two to produce a certain verse-type which was neither essentially religious nor

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essentially poetry. There have been brilliant exceptions of coursse in the period in Oriya literatute under review and there are sure traces of difference in the individual makers of poetry belonging to this age. But on the whole, the trend continues with full fleshiness and gives out an odour that smacks of decadence more than anything else.

It is also interesting to observe that almost during the same decades, there was a similar trend in the literature of north India. That came after the mighty age of the saints as the various orders after several of them came to sprout up and thought they could thrive as islands in themselves, weaving a theological knot round the name and writings of their gūrūs. The Mogul empire then was on the decline and the local Nawabs wanted to show up as independent constellations, little knowing that the age was about to dwindle and to fade away. It was in their courts that ornamental poetry acquired a flourish and could spread fairly to signify a trend. Kathak dance and what is now called Indian classical music also made a dent with the patronization from these courts The situation was about the same in the case of Orissa. Except a few who were genuinely religious in their loyalties and inclinations and who used the vaishnava themes as a then-available channel, the vast majority of them succumbed to the tradition of ornametation and revelled in it all the time using the gods and the myths around them as viable instruments. And what is more, this ornamentalistic fury came to such a pitch in Orissa as it never could in north India. There was

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also quite a passion for this ornamentation in some literatures of the south for a time, but its Orissan counterpart far excelled all the parallels. Even the tips from the Sanskrit literatūre and poetics, that had served as the source of inspiration for all such endeavours was in fact no match in comparison to what Oriya poets of this period had to show as an achievement.

Tracing back to find out a few probable specimens that have contributed to the culmination of a tradition in the period under review, we can with some logic begin with Śri Nārāyana Swāmi, the very interesting writer of Rūdrasūdhānidhi who seems to have still remained within a veil of mystery. The work is a structure in prose, yet bears all the conceivable palatability of poetry, specially because it is so full of erotic references that go to create a special atmosphere of its own. After that we have Jayadeva's Gitagobinda which though written in Sanskrit has had so much spread in the rank and file in Orissa, making an impact on Orissan literature and architecture and even calligraphy on the palm leaves. There is an opinion that Gitagobinda was a secular poem written at first to give pleasure at a king's court but the Gaudiya interpreters of vaishnavism later christened it into a religious treatise. Vātsāyana. the saint of the Kāmasūtra fame was very much in the classical tradition of India to inspire a secular theme and when the Rādhā-Krishna love was available as a neatly-fitting story to this theme, erotic literature had indeed its heyday. The erotic was also ornamental at the same time.

Even during the Panchasakhā period, there were several writers and their works representing this

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tendency at poetic ornamentation. Rāmabibhā of Arjūna Dāsa identified Rāma with Lord Jagannātha and produced a whole Kāvya dealing with his marriage with Śitā. He wrote also another Kāvya which is more secular, Kaḷpalatā. D'ebadūrlabha Dās, fixed at about the close of the 16th century wrote Rahasyamanjari. In the same category of books, we have Pratāpa Raya's Śashise'ṇā, Danāi Dāsa's Gopibhāśā, Śiśūśankara Dāsa's Ūṣabhiḷāsa, Narasimha Seṇa's Parimaḷā, Kārtika Dāsa's Rūkmini Bibhā and Biṣnū Dāsa's Premalochanā. Some of these are imaginary Kāvyas and the rest have associated themselves with themes from the Pūrāṇas. It is useful to remember that the Pūrānas had by now come to be translated and sometimes transcreated from the original Sanskrit and thus more than anything else, they made the great mass of stories and legends in them available to the Oriya writers and a few of them could be used as themes in the Oriya kāvyas. Two names have to be remembered in this field of producing the Pūrānas in Oriyas--Mahādeva Dāsa and Pitāmbara Dāsa. The former composed the Mārkandeya, Biṣhnūkesari and the Padma Pūrānas while the latter is credited with the authorship of the Oriya Nrusimha Pūrāna, radically different in matter of its constituent themes and treatment from the mother text in Sanskrit. There were before long also more than one further translations of the Rāmāyana and the Mahābhārata. There are two translations of Adhyātma Ramayana. Viswanātha Khūntia has rendered the more popular Bichitra Rāmāyana in the very much then in vogue Oriya Chhāndas. Ke'saba Pattanayak wrote another version of the Rāmāyana in Oriya now

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known as the Kesaba Râmâyana. A rajah of a principality in south Orissa, Krushna Simha gave a second translation of the Mahâbhârata.

Most of the imaginary Kāvyas have almost the same sequence as a theme. A couple, due to some lapse, are cursed to be born upon the earth and the kāvyas have painstakingly described the episode of their life in love here, its attendant anguishes of separation and joy of of reunion, till they have actually lived their complete schedule and then gone back to where they were. The religious themes deal with a story or the like from the lives of the two Indian archetypes-Rāma and Krishna. But to whichever category a particular Kāvya may belong, the essential purpose intended to be fulfilled is the same : an as far as permissible full flight into erotics and as far as possible a full demonstration of the ornamentalistic zeal and skill. It is said there have been Rāma-Ūpāsakas and Krishna-Ūpāsākas in the great and glorious *bhakti* tradition of the country. There have been noble and luminous illustrations of them in the tradition of the saint writers of India. But these ornamental poets we are now discussing were seriously speaking perhaps none of them. They were poets and loved to ornamentalize through poetry. They were skilled in their real craft and used the legendary archetypes as media. Their real heart was in their capacity to exhibit the skill. In however tacit a form it was in the earlier works of this age, that continued to become more and more pronounced and prominent in the later stages pushing out outer garb which was

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thought to have to do something with a religious sentiment. Purely secular themes were taken up to deal more freely with the ornamental and the erotic.

THE FIRST INITIATORS

Ornamentation as a major *Kāvya* style seems to have started with real earnest from Dhananjaya Bhanja, rajah of Ghumusar in south Orissa, who ruled in the latter part of the seventeenth century. The palace in which he happened to be the patriarch was full of intrigues as to who was to succeed him to the throne. Things developed in such a way that his queen served him poison with his food and thus he had to meet his end giving place 'to further intrigues and killings. Dhananjaya has no less than four imaginary Kāvyas to his credit: Tripūramohini, Ichhābati,Madanamanjari and Anangare'khā, the last acclaimed to be his best in terms of ornamentation and also of erotic expositions. Dhananjaya is better known as the inspirer grandfather of Ūpendra Bhanja who was to come after him to attain the highest excellence in the line and to be celebrated as the unanimously accepted monarch in the fields of kavyic engineering. We shall come to him later. Upendra is said to have been on the thresholds of youth when his grandfather was at his summit as maker of *kāvyas* and must have been inspired by the latter to'go into the same pursuit more systematically and with a much surer preparation. The grand father also wrote another *kāvya* called the Raghūnathabilāsa where the theme was from Ramayana, but the style was architectural.

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Bhūpati Pandita, a poet of about the end of the 17th century is an interesting illustration in the tradition for mainly two reasons. He was not born in Orissa and thus Oriya was not his mother tongue and he had nothing of the native literary tradition in his earlier upbringing. He had come to Orissa as a pilgrim and stayed on in Orissa and that too in the king's court. He must have very much fallen in love with the land, its people and its literary environment. He has written with a mastery and a sense of confidence as if Oriya had been really his mother tongue And that is exactly the second point to remember him He seems to have been very much attracted by the love-anecdotes spun through the ages around Krishna and utilized them with a complete sense of exhilaration in his books as a theme, yet he has not gone into the intricacies of an ornamental style of language as most of his compatriots have done. One reason behind this may perhaps be that Bhūpati learnt the Oriya language from his contacts with people, all sorts of people, and not from books as the *pundits* craved to do. It also appears probable that the *pundits* did not so much relish to have him in their company and wanted to see him disgraced in the eyes of the king. They told all sorts of stories about him before the king and complained that he was more a plagiarist than a real writer. They wanted to see him ostracized. The king is said to have summoned him to the court and told him that the latter would really prove his mettle if he could write something which was indisputably original. This led Bhūpati to write Premapanchāmrita, his only major work yet explored. In that book he has argued

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in favour of using Oriya as a medium of literature in lieu of Sanskrit by saying that Sanskrit is like the cocoanut fruit which requires quite an effort to break open its shell and reach the kernel, while on the other hand the spoken language is as simple to deal with as a ripe banana and can be enjoyed by all without making any special effort. Only a few can have an access to Sanskrit.

We have two great names as we enter into the eighteenth century in this period of Oriya Kāvya literature : Bhakta Charaṇa Dāsa and Dinakrūshna Dasa. Bhaktacharaṇa has written the very popular Manabodha Chaūtisa that so much inspires a sense of the transitoriness of our life in this world into those who otherwise are very much in this world. It has always tried to inspire a sort of righteous disgust into the very worldly engrossed, serving as a *quid pro quo* as it were. But whatever its intended speech may be, the language is plain and beautiful and speaks of the great range and capacity of Oriya as a medium. Even the illiterate and the most uninitiated can understand and appreciate the ideas expressed in the thirty-four stanzas of this chaūtiśā, Bhaktachrana's *magnum opus* is of course Mathūrāmangaḷa, depicting a Krishna story with all its parabolic overtures. The language used is a combination of simple poetic diction and ornamentalization. The erotic allusions are profuse of course, without which the adventures and superdeeds of the gods born on this earth could not be then dealt with justice.

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DINAKRŪSHNA DĀSA

Dinakrūshna Dāsa is a major poet of the age, with 'Rasakalloḷa' as his most celebrated creation. It is an ornamental Kâvya every line of which starts with the letter *Ka* and thus must have meant great labour for its architect-poet. The theme of course is the same Krishna theme. Besides, Nāmaratna Gitā, Prastābasindhū and Jagamohana Chhānda are some of his other works. Rasabinoda is another book thought to have been witten by him though there is an opinion that the latter is the work of another poet having the same name. For the lay *bhaktas* and appreciators of literature in Orissa, Dinakrūshna is known better because of his Ārtatrāṇa Chaūtiśā, written with as much of that feeling of ecstasy that the agony of life usually gives to a creative artist and writer. The Chaūtisā can be sung in a *rāga* very familiar to the people of the land and that adds to its inner appeal.

This brings us to Ūpendra Bhanja, proclaimed by many to be the towering poet of this age, nay the most towering of all ages in Oriya literature. The misfortune of Ūpendra ought to be that he has had a band of appreciators and admirers who hold him high as the only relevant in the realm of Oriya poetry. The trend has continued to linger even to our day. Ūpendra Bhanja was the crown prince of a king who had lost his kingdom and had to live as an exile. Of course, the father when he had lis turn, had managed to murder his elder brother and the latter's son who were aspirants to the

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kingship and had got the throne for himself. That fermented a second coup and with the tacit support of the people, the father was compelled to be deposed. Ūpe'ndra Bhanja is supposed to have been at the prime of his youth when these calamities befell the family. He refers to these losses at several places in his works. He also lost his wife, which must have given him a rude shock. The misfortune could be one of the factors why Ūpendra gave himself afterwards almost completely to poetry-making and his obsessions at worldly amorous relationships and poetic craftsmanship would have served him as necessary compensation.

ŪPENDRA BHANJA

For all intents and purposes Ūpendre Bhanja was a giant of a talent, the industrious type of an enthusiast who knew exactly what he wanted to take up as a calling and thus did all the *tapasyā* needed for it. He swam through the various branches of Sanskrit literature and studied all the books he came across on the different subjects. Besides the kāvyas, pūrānas and the nātakas, he had also studied deep into the Aḷankāras, Abidhānas, Dhanūrbeda, Āyūrbeda and what not. For all who aspired to go a-hunting in the enchanting wilds of the kāvyas, Kāmaśāstra was of course a must and the youthful Ūpendra Bhanja did full justice to it. As he says himself in more than one places in his works, he had attained to the verv end of the ocean that erudition was. Whatever he wrote was therefore only for the elect and was meant to be so. Ūpendra, as any other poet honest to his craft, did never have any scruple to assert

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that verses could be grasped and understood by the learned only, learned in the magic of word permutations and combinations. He professed he always wanted to keep his poetic creations away from the ignorant, and by this term he meant only people who did not have the Śāstric attainments. Though he had no kingdom to be a king over, he always took care to use the word *rajah* with his name when he wrote his verses. It can be rightly said that, even if he was an exile thrown out of the kingdom of his ancestors, he was a *rajah* in the realm of literature, dictated his own rules of grammar and diction and would not brook any complaint.

The quantity Ūpendra Bhanja has written is legion. Only a part of it has yet been published. And the various individual works are each an example of his mastery in one or the other particular field of versifying skill. We can begin with Lābaṇyabati and Kotibrahmāndasūndari, the subject matter of which Ūpendra Bhanja has culled from imaginary history. In the latter work, he comes out in one place to compare the achievement to the juice which is stored inside a sugarcane. One has to chew the cane in order that he may get the juice, but for that he ought to have very good teeth. Likewise, in a *kavya*, one must possess the required teeth of erudition in order that he may get an access to the real *rasa* that lies hidden within the hard crust of craftsmanship. In Premasūdhānidhi, another work of his, the poet compares it to a cocoanut where the kernel lies inside the hard crust of a shell and hence one has to break open the crust in order to get to the kernel. This work of his has illustrations of all sorts of play

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with word-placements available in Sanskrit poetic craftsmanship. Kaḷākaūtūka has the letter *ka* of the Oriya alphabet both at the beginning as well as at the end of every line. Another *kavya,* Sūbhadrāpariṇaya has only lines starting with the letter *sa.* Abanārasataranga is a queer and yet flabbergasting bit of an exercise where the entire body of the verse lines have only letters with the short a sound. That is quite a feat, though little care has been taken about the meaning they are intended to convey and more often than not meanings have been arbitrarily called in and imposed in order to give the senseless-sounding jabber the coherence of a meaning. Baide'hiśabiḷāsa is a work where verses begin with the letter *ba* all through and which deals with the saga of Rama and Sita with of course Ūpendra Bhanja's own overtones added to it.

Only one instance should suffice. It was on the eve of the war with Rāvana when Rama with the entire troupe was waiting on this side of the sea. Looking up at the sky, the Lord-incarnate glanced at a patch of dark cloud and because of the forebroodings of his mind took him for Râvana. Seeing him thus approach nearer, he takes up his bow and arrow to meet him, when Lakshmana comes to his rescue and tells him what the thing really was. After the disillusionment, Rāma entreats the cloud to pacify in him the fire of his erotic infatuation (*kāmānaḷa*) as it also pacifies the fire in the forest (*dābānaḷa*) Then the god-hero has also some sympathy for Sita and thinks out what her condition would be because of her separation from him. He

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prays again to the cloud that the latter should go to Sita also and advise her that she should take repeatedly the name of Lord Śiva, because of the fact that the practice soothes the anguish and the fever that is due to being deprived of sensual love relationship with a male. Even the Śaivites who presume that Śiva has the power of bestowing everything if asked by a sincere devotee will, when they are told so, hang down their head in shame. Only a *rajah* with the arbitrary freedom of a poet could write it.

Rasapanchaka is Ūpendra Bhanja's treatise on literary grammar and gadgeteering. Because he has used words with special and unusual meanings, he has compiled a whole dictionary of his own for the convenience of the readers. The book is called Gitābhidhāna which presents a glossary of meanings to words and even to letters. And to climax all as it were, Ūpendra Bhanja has also a Chitrakāvyabandhodaya to his credit, following a tradition that has been for some time in Indian as well as world literature. All this infatuation with ornate poetry sometimes being driven to an exasperating excess with it must have brought about a feeling of satiety to Ūpendra Bhanja at some stage of his craftsmanship as a writer. A hint of it can be sensed in his book of Chaūtisās, the Chhāndabhūṣaṇa where he no doubt gives the whole composition to sing of Krishna's exploits, yet has also this to say in an aside as it were : I have composed so many songs with the woman (*kāmini*) as the principal theme; but what worth has all that in comparison with the story of Krishna ? And one of the last works he has left in his name, is the

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Niḷadriśa Chaütiśa, a whole body of thrity-four stanzas in honour and adoration of Lord Jagannātha of Puri. It is said that Ūpendra Bhanja had spent quite some days at the great place and come under a different spell at least as a change.

Ūpendra Bhanja flourished at the fag end of the years of Muslim occupation in Orissa. Life, political, social and cultural, was completely topsyturvy. The king of Orissa had now reduced himself to the petty chief stationed at Khurdah, degraded and disgraced. He existed because the Muslim rulers allowed him to exist. One of them, in the diclining line, is said to have married from the Muslim ruling house also. To be more true, he was in all probability compelled to enter into the wedlock by the authorities that really ruled Orissa, To make the matter worse, Muslim rule itself then was also very much like a dismantled affair and therefore was more ruthless and rough. The Maratha powers had already begun to challenge it. Orissa fell to the yoke of the Marathās in 1751, almost in the very year Ūpendra Bhanja passed away. The Marathas were no better at least as far as Orissa then was concerned. They had perhaps never had any intention to provide an alternative in India and they gulped much more than they could actually swallow and manage. In Orissa, they have been called the *bargis*, meaning looters and plunderers, and in all intents and purposes, they have behaved in no different a manner. When there is anarchy and uncertainty in the outside, most of cowardly literature begins to seek even worse escapes and tends to wriggle into its own fabricated harems. That

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is what exactly came to happen in the literary scene of Orissa after Ūpendra Bhanja, with a few exceptions of course. Literature loved to provide a mighty mechanism of escape and remained too closed to become aware of of what was happening in the outside world.

It was at this time that Rādhā came with full official sanction to preside over the literary peregrinations of the Vaishnava poets. Poetry was encouraged to become more and more cultish. The poet who perhaps stands as a representative of this period of transition from disorder to yet more disorder is Lokanātha Bidyādhara whose Brūndabanabihāra is a frank and plain example of this intrusion. His other *kavyas* include Chitrākaḷā. Sarbāngasūdari, Rasakaḷā and Padmābatipariṇaya. As an expiation as it were, he also wrote a bunch of verses describing the many festivities round the institution of Jagannātha at Puri with the necessary alliterations and embellishments and combined these into a book called Niḷādrimahodaya. Of special mention ought to be made of his Bā Chaūtiśa which so distinctly stands apart from the rest of his works in that it says something about the turmoil that then prevailed. It was written in the guise of a prediction theme when Sahadeva, the youngest of the Pāndavas replies to the questions asked by the eldest brother, king Yūdhisthira. The actual mirror is Orissa under the Moguls and the descriptions reflect what the situation was at that time.

The next in the available list is Sādhūcharaṇa Hotā alias Sādhūcharaṇa Dāsa alias Sadananda

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Kabisūryā Brahmā. The second of the three was the name the poet assumed when he was formally initiated to the Vaishnava faith and the last was of course a title he got from the king. In literature he seems to be an initiate of Ūpendra Bhanja with somewhat an extended border. He was openly a Vaishnava of the rāgānūgā attitude, where Rādhā has the first pride of place. His principal works include Jugaḷarasāmrūtalahari, Prematarangiṇi and a few others of the like. All these literary creations mark a combination of at once the amorous presentations of the rāgānūga brand of Vaishnavism as well as the rich ornate style of the then prevailing literature, thus seeking to satisfy a larger audience and perhaps indicating how things that pertain to the most intimate sensibilities in life were then thought to be made available in a most demonstrative style for people who loved to have them that way. Sadānanda Kavisūrya Brahmā must have to a very great extent charged himself with the zeal to uphold a cult that he thought was the only right one. This gave him an easy permissibility to become intolerant about other ways and other attitudes. He seeks also to pull down contemporary predecessor poets including Dinakrūshna to show himself as it were at the highest and as the most correct.

This intolerance becomes more pronouced when we come to Dāśarathi, supposed also to have belonged to the first half of the 18th century. In the kāvya that goes by his name, the Brajabihāra, he seems to exhibit a tendency to write almost catechismically to prove that

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the cult that his literature had been called upon to serve was the right one. Dāśarathi indeed made a great leap in that he raised the status of Brūndābana to that of a *nityadhāma* giving only a subordinate status to the other dhāmas including the Jagannāthadhāma. Thus he obliterated the long tradition that had come right from the Panchasakhā through all the poets, religious and secular, as far as the 18th century, excepting of course the official *gaudiyas* who had always meant otherwise. For the former, the *nityadhāma* was the dhāma of Jagannātha and Sadānanda Kabisūrya Brahmā was perhaps the first among the poets to indicate that it was not so. Dāsarathi has supplied, a legend in which the original deity of Niḷamādhaba the Nityasiḷā, was being worshipped by the Śabaras on the Gobardhana hill and he submits that one can get a *darshan* of it only if Lord Krishna's pleasure has been first incurred.

SĀMĀNTASIMHĀRĀ

This brings us to the celebrated Abhimanyū Sāmantasimhāra, the writer of the Oriya kāvya Bidagdha-chintāmaṇi. Abhimanyū hails from the district of Cuttack, where his ancestors ruled as local barons. He is said to have been born in 1757. Sadānanda Brahmā, the poet-writer we have just discussed was his teacher —initiator both to literature and to the special vaishnava cult for which Abhimanyū wrote his major works. But before the initiation, he also wrote some songs on themes like hunting already when he was a teenager. But after the initiation he wrote only according to the cultish prescriptions. Besides Bidagdhachintāmaṇi, his writings

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include Sūlakshanā, Pre'machintāmaṇi, Pre'makaḷā and a few others, of which the first has all its stanzas beginning with the letter *sa*. It deals with the love affair of Krishna's son Sāmba with Dūryodhana's daughter Sūlakshanā, and the interclannish feuds that followed, ending of course in the victory of Krishna and hence the fruition of the marriage. Bidagdhachintāmani is of course Abhimanyū's best and the truest. It is reckoned among the best that the Oriya kāvya world has produced. The style combines the archaic and the lucid; words of the spoken language struggling to steal into the main structure that follows the official kāvya lines. Though the theme is apparently about Rādhā and Krishna whose adventures in love have so much attracted the sensibilities of men solely because they had been gods, nevertheless Abhimanyū's descriptions are as good as profane and thisworldly and arouse the most flesh-and-blood sentiments in spite of the garb of a theme used to say them. Besides, Abhimanyū has also written a number of chaūtiśās and *jaṇāṇas*. The latter are songs written to invoke a god to have his blessings for some amelioration or other. Abhimanyū has thus followed the pattern of almost all the major poets of the age, playing at once all the three roles and trying to excel in all the three of them : erotically written religious poetry at times to propound a particular cult, ornamentation driven to its senseless climax and the simple jaṇāṇas and chaūtiśās intended for the lay plebeians. Abhimanyū is said to have died in 1807.

After him, we have Jadūmaṇi Mahāpātra or Jadūmani (1781-1866) as he is more universally known.

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He wrote about two kāvyas, Prabandha Pūrnachandra and Rāghababiḷāsa. The first depicts the marriage of Krishna with Rūkmini and has verses which convey two meanings at the same time. But these works were imitations after Ūpēndra Bhanja and moreover appear at a time when the attraction for these sort of kāvyas was already on the wane. Jadumaṇi's greater mettle was in his wits and it is this for which he is still remembered by people of all stations. His wit attracted more than one kings to their courts, but when the witticisms became too staight and hence unpalatable, they incurred the displeasure of the kings and the poet had to run away from court to court. A notable exception among this lot of ornamentalists in Vaishnaba guise is of course Rāmachandra Pattanāyaka, the author of a pure this-worldly kāvya, Hārābati. Hārābati is a love story, but not of the escapist pattern of the apparent devotee having the Krishna episodes as usable covers; it gives a very simple account of the love between two ordinary mortals, a boy and a girl in the village with as simple a style as love itself could be. The treatment has also extended itself to describe scenes of village life, including the festivals and observances. There is absolutely no ornamentation. This is the first instance where common characters have been used to make up a theme for poetry, and in view of the time in which it was conceived, it was definitely a very worthy achievement.

The kâvya phase in Oriya literature in the middle ages was also a phase of versification with music added to it. These were written in the various chhāndas which

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constituted a distinctive school of music developed along the ages. These chhāndas have also been traditionally called *bānis.* aad *brūttas.* Lines which were otherwise written as prose sequences were called the *dāndi brūtta* when they were recited in such a way as to produce a coherent musical effect. Śārala Dāsa's Mahābhārata and Baḷarāma Dāsa's Rāmayāna had been written in this *brūtta.* As music came to become more and more a court fascination and thus got more chances of being systematically studied, a pattern of music called Odissi was developed and flourished side by side with Odissi dance, the classical dance form associated with this part of the country. Music served as the very vein of the Oriya kāvyas in the middle ages and people could use and appreciate them in spite of their inaccessible language. Till about the time of Abhimanyū, or roughly speaking till about the middle of the 18th century, there was both music and ornamentation in the kāvyas. Of course, the more popular *koilis, chaūtisās janāṇas* and *bhajanas* were specimens of the music minus the ornateness, meant mainly to satisfy the sensibility of the less sophisticated. But gradually, the general taste in the field came to be more for music and simple devotion as it were and there came poets, the composers of songs who responded to the need. The language tended to become more and more simple and unassuming. There was less and less of that artificiality once deemed to be a mark of real grandeur in versification, and what was more, the poets now appeared to be first bhaktas, real men of devotion and only then poets out to show a mark of artistry.

The first among these singer-poets is Banamāḷi, fixed to be in about the middle of the 18th century.

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Banamali's *padas* or songs are still alive even in our day and bear an appeal of permanence, because they are so genuinely expressed. Banamāḷi happened to be a product from the common stock, yet he did not ever persuade himself to go to a court to improve his lot by singing for the kings. He was poor and had difficulties in making the both ends meet, but he never compromised his poetry for a mess of pottage. He has been also credited to have written a kavya, Chāta Ichhābati by name. In one of the lines he has written he has perhaps come nearest to his deepest sentiments when he says that the people who are seated on the thrones as their occupants are miserably rent with arrogance and pride. They look so big with their big titles but are only poor discerners of the soul. The next is Baḷade'ba Ratha with the title Kabisūrya as sort of a prefix which he had obtained from the local *rajah* he was serving and which was later corroborated by the *rajah* of Puri. Baḷade'ba (1789-1845) is first remembered for his Kishorachandrānanda Champū, which describes the saga of the longings, partings and the ultimate meeting in amorous lock of Krishna and Rādhā. As the traditional Champūs in Sanskrit literature, This work of Baḷade'ba has both verse and prose in it. The role of the go-between, Laḷitā has a special significance here in this work in comparison with the roles ascribed to her in other similar works. The main style is of course that of Jayadeva's Gitagobinda, but there are notable variations also in respect of drawing out the characters and also the theme which weaves them together Though Rātnākara Champū is another of the same pattern that Kabisūrya has written, for many a reason, Champū for many people in Orissa

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means only the former one, with the richness of musical dignity with which its thrity-six songs have been composed. Though the meaning behind the wordy frame is not always accessible to many, the music of it has continued to be superb.

Gopaḷakrūshna Pattanayak (1785-1862) is remembered in Oriva literature as the most genuine song-maker. He came from the extreme south in Orissa which was not then a part of the administrative unit called Orissa. Gopāḷakrūshna's themes are of course of the same variety, as the other Vaishnaba writers, but the sentiments do not in this case need any ornamentation to be expressed, they are *expressed* because they are felt and lived. He has written innumerable *padas* and most of them have been so much liked and are sung even to this day, not necessarily by the offical followers of the order, but by all people who are drawn towards life with an attitude of love. It seems Gopāḷakrūshna has had very much influence on some Oriya poets later in the modern age especially those who have written love lyrics. His *padas* have therefore more of a genuine lyrical value than religious value. The love between Rādhā and Krishna and the many expressions of it have been depicted in such an unassuming human way and in such a simple language that for the reader and for the singer they seem more to inspire genuine love than to evoke a so-called religious devotion for a couple of legendary figures who had once loved and are now worshipped as deities. It is relieving to see that with Gopāḷakrūshna, the trend to say with ornamentation reached its lowest ebb and *bhakti* was rescued from its artificial robe that it

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had been compelled to wear by the enthusiasts of ornate poetry for whom bhakti was most probably a very secondary sentiment. But the spell came to reign for a long period of three hundred years and the emancipating process was anything but easy. The story of that emancipation was so full of hurdles and cnly the heroes among the poets could make the gradual shift possible.

BRAJANĀTHA BADAJE'NĀ

Brajanātha Badaje'nā (1730-1795) was such a hero. He hailed from Dhenkanal in the centre of Orissa and had to serve the court as a poet to eke out a livelihood, As the story goes, the poet had to serve several courts and had to leave each after violent differences with the *rajas* who ruled the courts. Badaje'nā in the single life of a poet, seem to mark a transition between ornate and court poetry on one hand and genuine poetry on the other. He has many works to his credit, both poetry and prose, but they clearly fall under two categories and thus mark a transition from the one to the other, from the feudal to what can be called modern, of course with certain reservations. When Badaje'nā was budding into a young man, it was the day of Ūpendra Bhanja in the world of poetry-making in Orissa All poetry was, according to the accepted canons, only court poetry. And the boundaries of theme and style in all poetry-making were fixed. It was but natural that Badajenā had to start along the recognized channel. His first *kavyic* creation was the Ambikā Biḷasa, which he wrote for the *rajah* he was serving and in whose name it really came to be. Though the *kavya* depicts the marriage of Śiva with Parvati, yet Badaje'nā

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does not leave it as a mere work according to the codes; there is enough adulteration and profane humour in it to show an originality that could be of Badaje'nā only. Śyāmarāsotsaba is another work of the same type where the lines through out had to begin with letter 'sa'.

Keḷikalānidhi is a third specimen belonging to the category of the stereotyped *kavyas* The very structure of these frankly indicates that they were written for the pleasure of king and his court and did not really spring out from genuine poetic experience. The poets were then often too poor and deprived to be able to live the wonderful flights of descriptions they had to spin into their kāvyas so that they could get the court's favour. To win over the bounty of an uncongenial court, Badaje'nā is said to have written the 'Samarataranga', a long poem about a war that was really fought between the master he was trying to please and the Maratha chieftains who were the virtual masters of the territories of Orissa at that time. Though written with an ulterior motive as it were, the poet in Badaje'nā soon surpasses the supplicator in him and produces some valuable poetry which speaks more about the capability of the poet than the heroicness of an unheroic king. The descriptions are so real, so full of humour, real humour and so artistically rent with movement and suspense. That Oriya poetry is capable of describing situations of war was long proved by 'Sāralā Dāsa in his Mahābhārata. The tradition has continued worthily as far as Bidaje'nā in the 18th. century. Samarataranga is a work the poetry of which can be appreciated and felt

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through by people of all ages and levels, The music of it, of the words and lines, has a charm and a sting of its own that delights you and soon you begin to feel as if you are in the very proximity of the poet himself.

Brajanātha Badajēnā's Chatūra Binoda is the only specimen of literary prose in Oriya available after Śri Nārāyana Abadhūta Swāmi's RūdraSūdhānidhi. We do have some prose available in between, but that does not tell us the kind that literary prose is, prose with the indispensable nuance of poetry in it. Chatūra Binoda is a full-fledged story in the style of the Sanskrit stories of old, but with an appeal and a projection that suggests the modern novel. It is humour and satire all through and has a way of speaking things that is at once straight and veiled, enlivening and introspective. And what is more, it seems nearly inconceivable that the poet who started his career with Ambikābilāsa, catering mainly to the requirements of a court could also write so wonderful a prose amidst that wilderness of Kāvyic indulgence that prevailed at the time and that too, produce a scintillating story like the Chatūra Binoda. As far as humour is concerned, it has hardly been surpassed by many modern writers who have intentionally taken to write humorous writings only Gūndichā Bije', a short poetical theme by Badaje'nā describing the pavilion of people at the time of the car-festival at Puri is another very remarkable job of his written in Hindi. So much has been written on the same theme and is being written even now, but Gundichā Bije' seems still to crown them all. The realistically charged descriptions of the situation

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take you as it were from the deities to life, actual life, which tells you that men are after all men even when they come together in the name of a deity.

In one of his shorter kāvyas, 'Bichakshanā, Badaje'nā frankly admits the limitation under which a poet has to labour, bound by the prescribed canons. The tether that the imagination of a real poet is allowed to get by the Kavyic sanctions is really very insufficient and inadequate, as Badajenā has found it to be. Bichakshanā had to have all its lines beginning with the letter '*ba*', and thus was more a hinderance than otherwise because for the poet it meant to be in a plight when you have to move with your hand and feet tied with a rope. The other books he wrote after that were written in the spoken language, with great imaginative ease and without inhibition. The courage that he took to occasion a change like this was the prop that gave us the later books like the Samarataranga and Gūndicha Bijē from him and above all, could further move him to write in prose with such a modern accent which one could not usually think of at a time like that. Strange again, Badajenā's level of prose did not have a second example of it till about a century after him and prose during this intermission, Oriya prose, seemed to have receded into a state of nonuse, or at best to an imitation of the ornate style then being followed in poetry.

The ornate age of Oriya poetry has its modern votaries, votaries who do not write as poets as the ornate poets then did, but who profess that that very

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age was the one when Oriya poetic excellence had reached its climax. One may not always endorse the claim but may do well to condone it and try to assess the whole period as critically and as sympathetically as possible. In view of the political and social situation which obtained at the time, most of literature was bound to be ornate and bound to be court literature. It has been always a rule that court poetry has to be ornate poetry, artificial poetry, where you have to make things not as you experience them to be, on the other hand, you have to embellish them with all sorts of glare and glamour so that they appear palatable to the people who have not themselves a poet's sensitivity, but who have poets employed by them to amuse and to entertain them. As we look at the mass of poetry produced during this period in Oriya literature, we begin to see very clearly that the real stake of these poets is not *bhākti*, it is *Reeti* or a particular style, it is not love; but a demonstrativeness, a demonstration of skill, learning and grandeur. It is an attitude that loves to say a thing that is simple in a round-about obtuse way, to love your words so much that you lose all sense of proportion and propriety and in the process kill the very soul of the thing you wanted to say with the help of your words. Words have always deceived a writer when he has made himself so outrageously dependent on them.

The Muslims had Orissa as rulers in 1568. They were succeeded by the Marathās who had no designs to be rulers and hence satisfied themselves with acts of plundering. The entire life was utterly disorganized.

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The petty kingships continued to exist in isolation, not of course as politically free entities, but as subordinate cess-payers to the real masters, and tyrants at home over their own subjects. They had given themselves to all sorts of indulgence and laxity, as is often the case when decadence comes to swallow up the normal endeavours and aspirations. To have a cluster of people who will be always there to please and to entertain had been a familiar court style in India since very long and the poet was a part of this cluster. At times the chiefs were also encouraged to write themselves. But the sole aim was enjoyment of a vicarious type where you did not really experience yourself what you entertained yourself with in literature. It is not an accident that almost all the names, great and less great, we have as poets during this period of ornate literature were either from the feudal families or they were people who were patronized by them and wrote of course to give them pleasure when they needed it. It was in the very fitness of things.

The *reeti* poets were the studious poets. In order to be able to write, one had to make tremendous Intellectual preparations and a poet was therefore judged on his merit of this preparation. The invitation to poetry-making was not an invitation to the heart in man, to the finer indescribable sensibilities which know and feel into things as wholes. As Dinakrushna Dāsa has said in Rasakalloḷa, *rasa* or the poetic faculty is possible only when the ocean of erudite learning has been churned by your intellectual power, using it as the *mandara parbata*. In the *bhaktisastras* all over the

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world, the propensity of intellectual knowing has been given only a secondary place, even described at times as an obstacle. That in the age of ornate poetry-making *reeti* had pushed away *bhakti* to the side is proved by the fact that intellect was given so important a priority. Abhimanyū in his *magnum opus* already discussed compares the poet to an archer who only is capable of pure poetry. The poet who cannot make the head giddy as he enters the heart of the reader through his poetry is really no archer at all. All poets, Abhimanyū says, are great painstakers who have acquried their craft through tremendous labour.

The preparation was really huge The belief seems to have been that if some one had a desire to write poetry he had to go down for the ordeal of these preparation even before he explored into himself to be sure that he had a real sensibility for poetry-making. As a poet of that brand belonging to 17th century has aptly mentioned by way of a personal narrative, he had to go the dictionaries and grammars, master the *alankāras* from the Śā*stras* written on the subject, he had to study astronomy, get the *rāgas* from studying the treatises on music, had an orientation in the religious usages from the the *smritis*, in ethics from the *neetisāstras* get the stuff of the stories from the *purānas*, rudiments of medicine from the reputed books on that subject, get the *tattwas* from the vedas and of course the tenets of *bhakti* from the Bhāgabata. Amarakoṣa must have been the main source of inspiration for these poets. They incorporated into the Oriya language all the Sanskrit

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words with their synonyms and what not, even if they were not in vogue in Oriya. There is no sense in assuming that all Sanskrit words can be used as *tatsama* words in the regional languages including Oriya, only because the latter have derived much from Sanskrit. But even the incorporation of all and sundry Sanskrit words according to convenience and requirements of poetic craftsmanship was not deemed enough. The poets, specially the comparatively more celebrated, the *chakravartins*, coined their own unusual words to fit their structures, often in caricature imitations of Sanskrit diction. These new imported things would not be intelligible even to *pundits*, though they now thrust them into the kāvyas and demanded an acceptance. The poets of the age worked as instruments in this process.

AN OVERALL ASSESSMENT

To repeat what we have already told, Oriya did exist as a language before it was allowed to become a medium of literature. It did have the dynamism of its own and was developing in spite of the ill-will of the *pundits.* Śārala Dāsa and the Panchasakhā had rescued it from its place of disgrace and used it as a vehicle for literature. Through them, there was not very much of a gap between the spoken and written languages and that helped literatūre and life come closer to each other. That promoted an integration in the various fields of Orissa's social and cultural life. The process got a check when the *reetikavis* came. However sincere might have been their enthusiasm, they helped in

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making written Oriya turn into a language much away from life and its everyday use. The type of Oriya they wrote in their Kāvys was not Oriya at all. Thus it became gradually a privilege only of those who were specially qualified for it and hence served mainly as a vehicle of entertainment and sport. Oriya as a language related to life was thus taken away from its real mooring, and the tradition in the field built up by Śāraḷā Dāsa and the Panchasakhā was thrown to the winds. The language now used in literature became a special prerogative of the *pundits* and the real tongue was left condemned and forgotten, totally outside the courts Most probably from there we got a tradition of dividing the language into two categories, chaste and unchaste, the former meaning the words that can be used when you write and the latter only the others that can be used while you speak but which are not allowed to come into what you write.

Without much transferring the context we can call the Oriya literarture of this period as *scriptus classicus*, meaning the literature of the higher classes, a term used in the days of the Roman empire in Europe. The canker seems to continue even to-day, when a school boy uses almost two different languages, one at school when he writes Oriya and the other when he speaks Oriya at home and in the neighbourhood in everyday parlour. Specially in a region like Orissa, where about three fourths of the population live below the poverty line and therefore the formal education line, the division has a much worse effect and does much injury to everybody concerned. Most of what was

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written in the Kāvya period in Orissa was written for the specially qualified, for the *rasikas* as the poets have often described them to be. Some of them have even gone out to the extent to say that the aim behind all their Kāvyic adventure is to create something as a beautiful lady (*Kāmini*) could be so that it may invoke in the reader the passion (Kāma) that is yours when you look at a beautiful lady. The work will be a perfect one with the *aḷankāric* embellishments and be simply enthralling to all those who are built appropriately to be able to appreciate. This, they have said, was the highest possible attainment for a poet. Even the celebrated Abhimanyu Sāmantasimhara in a sort of introduction to his work 'Sūlakshana' has said the intended work will be complete with all the appropriate *alankāras* and will give one happiness as a beautiful lady is expected to do.

This brings us to what goes in the name of *Śrungara* as a *rasa* in Sanskrit poetics. *Śrungara* is only one of the many *rasas* and is never the whole of life, *Śrungara* as something like the concept of libido, must include *eros* and *agape* as they have been thought of in Greek classical lore. The poets of the Kāvya period in Oriya literature have used *Śrungara* as absolute monists as it were, assuming as if it was the only one *rasa* That too, they have given the thing a very special meaning where it means the amorous relationship one has with a lady. This then gets a connotation that becomes reserved soley for the male. The society in which those poets flourished and. versified, of course, was one

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where only the males mattered. All this brings about a sort of morbidity and that sense of overzealousness that is often associated with that morbidity. And in the entire process, the zeal for Srungāra degenerates into an obsession and does not remain the whole attitude it could otherwise stand for.

Ūpendra Bhanja, acclaimed to be the king among the writers of this variety always means only this whenever he talks about Śrungâra. He says, the body of a beautiful lady is for a young lady no other than Lord Vishnu's abode, the famed *Baikuntha* of the Vaishnavas and the purānas. He conforms by also saying that it is not at all a very big thing to be the ruler of a kingdom, it is neither great to be as rich as the most affluent among the gods, the Indra, because the source of the greatest happiness conceived of is the conjugal life one lives with a lady. That really is the giver of peace, the antidote to all the pangs due to separation. The lady which you have by your side is the only armour to protect you against cupid's arrows. Drawing his own conclusion, Ūpendra Bhanja condemns all those who are not schooled in this art of amorous life of passions, to be only beasts with human shape. It is not surprising that the poetry of this period was predominantly court poetry written for the court. It got almost a welcome access to the courts because it was safe literature, a literature that could induce its readers to go to sleep. It worked as a tranquillizer as it were and killed the real hungers of the people. It only shows how closed Orissa was at that time and what a poor and closed

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view on life the literature of the period professed to give to its people. Ūpendra Bhanja in his Lābanyabati has more than once said that one should not leave his own native place and go abroad far away from home. The meaning was never to be deprived of the happiness that the company of your lady at home gives you and therefore not to go away from her. We can extend the metaphor by saying that the entire Kâvya period in Oriya literature was a time when it was a taboo to travel far than the prescribed small boundaries. Only one aspect of life was so blatantly overstressed that to be aware of the other aspects was looked upon as a straying away and a trespassing. Even the poets deemed it a sin to aspire to ascend to the further heights of their creative endeavour. Viewed from this respect, the period was a period of remaining satified with very little, to feign a big show within boundaries that really fill up very little, to take the outer elegances to be the real stuff of the heart and confuse a few obsession for a real treatment of intimacy and nearness.

Courage was the thing most lacking, the courage to be. To be in love, with life, with the world and with the things of beauty is to get over the inertia that keeps you inwardly a coward. The petty kings in the many islands that Orissa was then reduced to be inspired anything but courage. The poets who flourished during the rule of these kings likewise have not written much that inspire real courage and makes you aware of the inherent dignity you have in you as a human being. The poets who often described themselves as heroes,

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master archers and what not, were really very small-eyed within and were used to exaggerate the description of the kings they were serving to often ridiculous dimensions. They, through the long tongue of their *aḷankāras* and alliterations described the very small kings and chiefs as the mightiest monarchs under the sun who also commanded a beauty which would put cupid into shame. Kabisūrya Balade'ba did the same thing for the master who had him in his court, though the area over which the master had a jurisdiction consisted of only a few square miles. The poet in Kabisūrya seems to have come to senses when a point of saturation came and he came forward to condemn himself for having done all that. He expressed regret that he had compromised his devotion to God with singing the praise of a mere mortal stationed at a high place only because of a greed to earn more money.

But the only one example that stands apart as having shown real courage to do his duty to his literature, even if it meant defying a king in power in this age, is Dinakrūshna Dâsa, whose works we have already discussed. It is said that the-then king of Orissa who was then almost a titular small thing of Khurdah expressed that the poet Dinakrūshna should write a book in which he should give the king's name as the author. This is how the incident has been narrated by Râma Das, who has written an Oriya equivalent of Nābhāji Dâsa's Bhaktamâl in Hindi: The king said, "If you put my name as the writer in one of your works, I shall make you a grant of villages and lands. I shall

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allow you to live happily in my kingdom, because you see, I am the Lord of this kingdom. But if you do not do as I want you to do, you will have to do it only at your own peril." Dinakrūshna replied, "You are the king no doubt, but I am not afraid of you. I am no weakling because I have my Great Lord who will sustain me. The skies may fall down if it so will, but I shall on no account write anything that will go in another person's name."

The king was angry and he taught a lesson to the poet for his insubordination by throwing him into prison for some time. Dinakrūshna had to undergo the punishment, but he won as a poet. There are hints of this attitude of him in Rasakallola, his most known work we have already discussed. In a couple of brilliant verse lines he says, "If you are a real devotee of Lord Krūshna, if you have really chosen the path of learning for yourself, you cannot bend your knees before a *pāsānda*, an unworthy villain of a man and sing his praise. This is not the proper thing to do says Dinakrūshna; it will be like allowing a dagger to be pierced into your own chest." Dinakrūshna had to struggle along his days under pains of great misery and poverty, but he never allowed his head bend down before the arrogance of any authority. He was in this way the only poet among the poets of his age. He mercilessly condemned those who had taken to the path of a devotee of God only in the garb, flaunting about as painted pictures with an inside that was full to the brim with sin. He had also a slant at the hypocrites parading

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as poets and men of religion. He speaks it out in a place in the same book of his, "The worst for a poet is when he stoops down to sing the praise of an unworthy person. It is much better to kill yourself by thrusting a dagger into your breast than having had to do that"

Dinakrūshna indeed was a poet with a backbone. But in the period to which he belonged he was a rare exception. The literature of the time was as it were a a complete reflection of the time. The other role of literature as a challenge to its own time and as a redeemer that takes its age out of the prevailing darkness and death all around was inconceivable at a period like that During the three centuries that passed when the kâvyas were being written, it was winter in Orissa. The saints and their tradition were living a life of exile far away from the main stream of events. They did not have a leadership which could be adequate to meet the darkness on its face. The rulers, the outsiders, did not have any roots in the life of the people. They plundered as all outsiders would have done and had no intention to settle down here. The native rulers, much cut to size and fallen from grace, had an easy game in the people and basked in a very inflated image of themselves within the petty territories they had to their share The poets, at least most of them, served the kings, some of whom were also poets themselves. They had their precise range in which they could tread about and wrote in a prescribed manner, thereby greatly injuring the sensibility of the people. In the sphere of language, there was a sort of regression, and what was produced

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as literature was so much delinked with the language that the vast majority of the people spoke and lived with.

The most valuable gift that this period has given to us as a heritage to be grateful for, is music. Most of what the poets of this period wrote could be sung and they were really sung for the entertainment of all concerned. That gave ample opportunity for Odissi music to develop and explore its many possibilities. Most people then did not understand what the poets wrote as literature, but they could enjoy most of them being sung and felt into the body of it Even to-day most people do not understand what all was written then, but they are drawn to it by the music of it. One cannot imagine what would have been the fate of all that literature if the people did not have the associated music as a medium through which to come to it.

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CHAPTER VII

THE WINGS OF CHANGE

The British conquered coastal Orissa from the dismembered Maratha power in 1803 and the western parts of the Oriya-speaking tracts after 15 years in 1818. The first segment where Oriya was being spoken by a great majority of people and that was included in company-ruled India was of course the two southern districts. These came to be ruled as a part of the Madras Presidency the coastal districts were appended to company's government with Calcutta as its centre and western Orissa was a part of the-then central province, a unit which was just getting a form of its own. And the vast tracts of Orissa, tracts being ruled by the feudatory states, were not in any way linked with these districts as far as an administration was concerned. This was roughly the shape Orissa had, when it came out from the old into the new.

As a receptacle for the new, Orissa then presented anything but a proper sort of infrastructure with its several limitations of a closed society that it was. There were pockets of light as it were in a vast expanse of darkness and primitivity. There was so much of a regional imbalance between zones and the people of one

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region were totally cut off from those of another. The e'lite everywhere were an island apart and they too were very shortsighted and local in their attitudes and aspirations. Most of what went in the name of literature was very local and much exhibited the closedness that prevailed. The world literature then catered, was really a very small world with its many smallnesses about a world-view. The poets who wrote poetry often had no acquaintance with one another, There was almost no contact between the literary-cultural movements that took place in the various regions. The horizons were also small and suffered very much from a sense of self-sufficiency that needs no contact and intercommunication. Even the physical distances were very long and neighbourhoods seemed to be worlds apart. All thanks must go to Puri, the seat of Lord Jagannātha, that was the only point of contact for a whole people and the only place of meeting which gave the semblance of a unity.

As the East India Company began to settle down in larger and larger parts of the Indian subcontinent and the foundations of an empire were being laid, India also came in contact with the total western world, with its civilization, a new look at life, ideas of progress and its ideals of an active participation in the making of its own destiny. With it also came western science and the scientific attitude towards life as a whole. These were things with which India had not been acquainted before as a way of life. Thus there was a clash of the two cultures and the two worlds. That led to a disorganization on a grand scale, collapse of the old values, end of

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an age-long isolation of the self-sufficient type and before long also a sort of reorganization set in in the form of a synthesis and regeneration. In many a respect, it engendered a new birth and hence the shaking of the very foundations. A big galaxy of great men, with a new vision, a new faith, persons who could at once discover their own roots and yet open their windows to new winds, appeared and heralded a change and a revaluation. That is the most precious outcome of the clash and the contact and even after the empire has ended up now in its own time, we are grateful that the west is there with us. It helped us in every way to know ourselves better, more integrally and to open our windows, take up new wings and set out with a new process of becoming as a people. India could not remain the old India any more. It became a part of the world in the entire meaning of the term.

The regeneration due to this contact came more intensely where the Indian people had better chances of this contact. Calcutta and Bengal for that matter was one such centre. Orissa, coastal Orissa to be more precise, was then tied to the administration at Calcutta and thus had the first contamination from the north, through the British officers who were deputed from Calcutta to govern it, through the Bengalis who had the benefit of English education and came to Orissa to assist the officers and above all the first pioneers in Orissa itself who had vision and the insight to be able to sense the future that was in the offing and whose hour had then come. Orissa as a people was very late in catching up with the new trend, because

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of the circumstances prevailing here and because of an infrastructure that was more resistant to change than otherwise. We shall now very briefly glance over these various factors.

When the larger part of the country was being taken by storm by the new awakening there was darkness and an unreadiness prevailing in Orissa. Bad rule and look by the strong who had beset Orissa from outside had taken away all confidence from the people and isolation was the only lot. Literature was an affair of the courts and though poets seemed to be singing about the gods, it was mostly on the courts upon which they were so helplessly dependent. Orissa came to mean three different fragments of a tract as far as political governance was concerned. During the first half century after the British occupation of these fragments, the people of Orissa seem to have known nothing about the new waves that were shaping even the immediate neighbourhoods anew. The feudatory chiefs were big frogs in their respective small wells. The British took a fixed amount of revenue from them according to agreements reached individually with each of them and allowed them to live with their anachronisms. These chiefs got an easy victim in their subjects and ruled them as empire heads as it were. There was no limit to how much and in how many ways they could exact taxes from the people who were thus exploited in the most primitive ways even to the very day of India's political independence. Sometimes the kings exacted a thousand times more from the people as revenue of what they were required to pay

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to the British crown. Most people in Orissa at a challenging moment of India's encounter with west, both at the highest and the lowest, were living at this level of utter unawareness, complacent, closed and abandoned.

After the advent of the Company rule, the Christian missionaries also came to Orissa in 1822. Prior to that in 1807 a glossary of Oriya words with their English meanings had been compiled at the Fort William College at Calcutta for the convenience of the Company's officers employed in Orissa. Its interest in the Oriya language does not seem to have gone farther than that. But the missionaries were instrumental in some real pioneeting which opened further vistas for the first infrastructures to be built up. They started an Oriya printing press at Cuttack in 1836. Of course the first Oriya Bible had been brought out outside Orissa already in 1811. The first school in the modern sense of the teım was established at Cuttack in 1823. By the time of the Mutiny it is said that there were only three high schools in Orissa, all of them in the coastal districts and in all about 300 pupils had bean enrolled in them. In the feudatory states, there was not a single school nor a post office. The consensus in general was nowhere in favour of English education. The Brahmin e'lite at and around Puri who had the very institution of their life linked with the temple of Jagannātha were against this new transgression. The various regions were as it were continents apart from one another and there existed nothing like an integrated Orissa in the mental map of most people including the

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comparatively more capable. The Bengalis who came to Orissa to help the Sahibs in the administration were primarily exploiters and were emotionally very hostile to the interests and aspirations of the people they were there to govern. Like all middlemen everywhere they had their own vested interests and as a privileged class standing nearer than others to the masters whose deputies they were, they had reasons to be more clever, shrewd and hostile.

At the time of the transfer of power from the Company to the crown, the British were ruling Orissa from Calcutta as the headquarter and their only deputies were those who came with them from Bengal. Through these Bengalis, the coastal districts came in contact with the new wave that was then stirring the leading minds of Orissa. The nationalistic inspirations from Orissa had also given rise to a regional sort of national spirit and thus some Bengalis thought in its wake that they could also absorb Orissa into Bengal. They said Orissa was a part of Bengal and also that Oriya language was just a dilect of Bengali and thus could be assimilated into the latter. Their position in the administration of Orissa naturally gave them an edge of advantage. There were already voices being heard in Calcutta to introduce Bengalee in the schools in Orissa and quite a few of the leaders in Bengal also put their support in favour of the move. In a meeting held at Cuttack in 1868, the Bengalis openly voiced the same opinion and there was no protest. The same opinion was expressed in a session of the Asiatic Society at

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Calcutta and there was none in Orissa to protest against it. In a subsequent session, of course, John Beams, then a highly placed British official in Orissa, read another paper there suggesting that Oriya was a full fledged language on its own merit and could not be substituted by any other.

PYĀRI MOHANA ACHĀRYA

Oriya, as a language, was still faltering to come to establish itself and there was no leadership which could take up the cause. Even in the very first Oriya drama, 'Bābāji', the writer Jagamohana Lālā has made his Oriya characters speak in Bengalee with their Bangali and in English with their English counterparts. This will give an indication of what image the language had in the minds of the educated Oriyas of the time. The singular exception was of course Pyārimohana Āchārya who seems to have sensed in full the implications of the upheavals that were coming. Pyārimohana was a rebel from more than one point of view, and though he died at a premature age of thirty only, he more than any other person of his time, symbolized the best and the most aware in the mind of Orissa. His ten years' active life suggests the heights of a range which a real leadership in Orissa had then to take account of. He edited a journal 'Ūtkaḷapūtra' in which he discussed the whole range of possibilities, social, educational, cultural, that lay in wait for a whole people in Orissa. He was much in advance of his times and would even now be labelled as a radical by many. He was the author of "Odisā Itihāsa" the first book on Orissa's history and gave much

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headache to his less exposed and also less aware contemporaries.

Almost all the persons who could see and sense the immediate events and their implication, including Pyārimohana, had put very much confidence in the British Raj, which they thought was sure to dispel the darkness and the ills that prevailed then in Orissa. It is of course very understandable. The about three centuries of Muslim and Maratha rule had so hardened the sensibilities of the people and made them reconciled to fatalism that anything they thought would be a change for the better. The belief seems to have lingered pretty long. Even as late as 1904, we have as an end-climax in the drama "Ūtkala Dūrdaśā" written very much after the mode of Bhārate'ndū Harischandra's "BhārataDūrdaśā" a scene where Oriya language personified as a character in a feat of despair goes to commit suicide by piercing a dagger into her breast, when suddenly an Englishman appears on the stage and bursts out as an oracle, "The Government has been now pleased to come to a decision and give an order. From now on, this land of Ūtkal will have no sorrow to suffer and to moan for." In an etherized time like that, the only optimistic tone was of course Pyārimohan's, though the others also came after him. Once in the seventies of the nineteenth century, he wrote in the Ūtkaḷapūtra" : "Whatever has been possible by man will also be possible here If it is not possible in a day, it will be 'possible in a thousand days : if not possible in a thousand days, then of course in a thousand years. Wherever there is an effort, it

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will definitely be possible". Pyārimohan should have lived much longer.

MAHIMĀ DHARMA AND BHIMA BHOI

It is so interesting to note that a real protest had then to come from Mahimā Dharma, an autochthonous religious movement, in Orissa in the nineteenth century. Very strange again that the centre of the movement was not the coastal districts of the state. The seat of the Mahimā Dharma continues to be in the district of Denkanal in central Orissa. The leader of the Mahimā Dharma was Mahimā Gosāin, about whom very little has been yet known. But it is almost sure that he had come in contact with the Christian missionaries and their literature. Mahimā Dharma was the last protest of the saints against the established Hindu religion. It was not a Buddhistic movement, neither had it to do anything with the Vaishnava way of worship, it did not believe as a religion in getting the sanction of the king to be able to survive and flourish and it proclaimed an open revolt against the exeternalist obsessions in religion. It flourished out of the courts, out of the influences of the king's mace, flouted the superiority of the Brahmins and registered most of its followers from the lowliest and the downtrodden in society. It was an effort to give to those who stood at the lowest in a status-infested society a real sense of human dignity and sought to raise them up as equals and devotees. The movement continues to live, mostly as a vestige of an alternative to what is and as an indication of what might be,

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Bhima Bhoi is the most precious gift of the Mahimā Dharma to Oriya literature and he should also be claimed as the most precious gift of Orissa and Oriya literature to the legacy that is India. Bhima Bhoi was an Ādibāsi, came from a poor *Kond* family. He lost his eye-sight when he had yet to find himself out in the world. But the gems of literature be has dictated to be copied down and preserved are so full of sympathy, understanding and love towards mankind and the bright future that waits for him if he chooses to follow the real path to enlightenment, cleanses himself of all egotism and prejudice and has the right kind of courage which helps him grow into the fullest realization of the man in himself, expressed at its best as living for the entire mankind and for God. The language Bhima Bhoi has used is the clear, spoken language that an illiterate but inspired man could command. Bhima Bhoi belonged to Sonepur, one of the-then feudatory small states in western Orissa, had to suffer the wrath of his king and is also ascribed to be the person who had inspired an attack on the Puri temple by the new sect of Manimā Gosain's followers, claiming that Lord Jagannātha did not belong to the Brahimns and the higher castes, but to the original inhabitants of the land, the Adivāsis.

There are many books attributed to Bhima Bhoi's name. The most widely khown are the Stūti Chintamani, Srūtinisedha Gita, Brahmanirūpana Gita and the Nirbe'da Sādhana But the most loved and widely known are the scores of *Bhajans* he has left to all who would hunger for a better life also in this world, a life of

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consecration and complete offer. In a line in Stūti Chintāmoni, he says he is not so much worried at all for his own salvation, he would rather pray for the whole world's redemption from misery, greed and heartlessness ane would work for it even if it means his own life being condemned to rot in hell. Bhima Bhoi's literature is full of hopes and also full of promise. There is so much of the modern sensibility in his views on man, his society and the institutions that nurture him to what he becomes that one wonders how when the e'lite and the established seem to tarry and appear confused, the needed guidance in India comes from the ordinary level, the plane of the lowly but the most wise. As Oriya literature advances and as more and more people really seek and choose to live life not in fragments but as a whole having a definite base, a centre and its dimensions there will be more and more need for it to come back to Bhima Bhoi and rediscover him. Bhima Bhoi is said to have left this world in 1868.

The three notable writers we shall remember as we come to the last quarter of the nineteenth century are Radhānâtha Roy, Madhūsūdana Roy and Fakiramohana Senapati. Of course there was already a beginning in Orissa towards writing the first novels, first dramas and the like. Gouriśankara Roy's Ūtkala Dipikā 1866 gave much stimulus to pioneer writings in Oriya and before long there were many other journals also to inspire the needed fermant to write. The first complete novel to be published was Umesh Chandra's 'Padmamāli' (1888) and the first dramas were Jagamohana's 'Bābāji' (1877)

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and Rāmaśankar Roy's 'Kānchi Kābe'ri' (1880). Though really brave attempts and though they inspired all concerned to look forward for more to be written in Oriya literature, they were not real departure, from the old, though the forms strived to be new. But the real mettle was with the three we have named above and we shall do well to discuss them in some length to be acquainted with what was happening and not happening in Oriya literature for about two quarters of a century. It was the day for prose, though poetry, perhaps taking the queue from prose also did discover new dimensions for it and learned to sustain itself by a much wider hinterland. It was prose that so much saved literature from now on from the calamity of fleeing away and seeking escapes and also was instrumental to bring down poetry nearer to earth, to life and to some real stuff and form. With prose also came the short story, the novel, the drama and above all, the easy, The new wings were only a response to the challenges of the new wind that came upon the country to shake the old foundations. The winds came because of the western contact.

RADHĀNĀTHA ROY

Rādhānātha Roy (1948-1908) had his education at Calcutta and was working as an inspector in the education department of Bengal which then included Orissa also. He was well acquainted with Bengalee and English literatures and also had started with writing in Bengalee. His Bengalee readers and appreciators, some of of them writers of repute in Bengalee, advised him to write

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in Oriya, which was his language by right. The prize of place in Rādhānātha's works is in the field of kāvyas which are many in number. Some of them are: Kedāragouri, Chandrabhāgā, Pārbati, Nandike'sari, Usha and Chilika. Mahājatrā is written in a blank verse style after Madhusūdan's 'Me'ghanādabadha' in Bengali. Most of the themes Rādhānāthā has used in his kāvyas are adapted from the stories of Greek and Roman literature and legends. From the descriptions it appears that Rādhānātha was mainly a poet of nature, and love for the story seems secondary to his love for nature. He looked at everything he saw in Orissa—its lakes, mountains, rivers and forests, with an eye full of a sense of inspired appreciation and magnified it into a thing of beauty. The beauty was of course in the poet's eye which could make beautiful everything it saw. There is also a very well-written Sanskrit verse in his name written in honour of India as the motherland of all who live in this land Most beautifully he has depicted India as the whole lotus flower in which Utkla, Orissa, is a proud petal.

Rādhānātha's Darabāra, a satire in poem, has a singular place in the entire world of his works. The scene is the *Durbar* the British had arranged in Orissa to commemorate the occasion of some imperial visit and all the *Rajahs* and important persons went there with their complete liveries and bands of mark. In an unusually simple style of words which is really a great departure from the language used in other poetical works of his, he seemes to have for us a hearty laugh at

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these slaves parading to be greats in the band-master's gallery. Sullen and introverted by temperament, it must have been a mighty feat for Rādhānātha to discover this other side of his poetic sensibility and carry humour to a height where it is really wisdom. The poet had also made some efforts at prose-writing, but the little prose he wrote only betrays the fact that he was not made and meant for prose. Most probably he was not acquainted even with the prose Brajanātha Badaje'nā was able to write quite a century and half before him.

The real spirit of the west had anything but touched Rādhānātha. The plots he got from some books of the classical west was perhaps all that he had as a contact with the west. But its real props had eluded him. Even he had not received the message of the west into him to the extent that young Pyārimohana had done. Definitely he had not read what the latter was then writing in Ūtkalpūtra. Rādhānatha, it has been remarked, had the past sitting heavy upon his mind and thus he deprived himself of so much that was around him as the new wind. His own wings stuck so much in the world that was and that was going to be left behind. He has himself admitted that the writings of Ūpe'ndra Bhanja were a great inspiration for him, and as a recent critic has observed, he in his nearest identity was the last representative poet of the Bhanja school.

Madhūsūdan Rāo (1853-1912) was a *bhakta* and a *Brāhmo*. The conversion took place when he was in his early youth. The new faith was at once a revivalistic faith that attracted the e'lite classes in society. The

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innermost inspirations behind it were perhaps not devotional, but intellectual. The poems, which seem to be the only worth while wealth Madhūsūdan has produced in Oriya literature have the lotus flower, the river, the sky, the six seasons of the year and a brilliant soliloquy on the impermanence of life; but only man is conspicuous there by his absense. The God of his descriptions fills so much of the space given to poetry, but one is disappointed not to find in it the world inhabited by men. His poems bear the testimony as if he was not at all aware of the changes that were going around him, the turmoils and the new waves, as he was writing his poems. His odes are some of the best and the most involving in Oriya literature. He does speak of humanity in one of his poems, but it is with him in all probability an abstraction and does not suggest the real humankind constituting living human beings.

India's encounter with the west, especially in Bengal, seems to have interacted in two different directions. The first is a dissatisfaction and a feeling of inadequacy about what one had at home as culture and as a heritage and therefore called for more dynamism, mobility and the willingness to change. It came nearer to the new ideas of humanism, education and the modern temper to adopt them to the conditions at home. The other was a call back to the past, looking at it with a discerning eye, rediscover it and make a reassessment of it. This gave vent to itself in the form of a revivalism that was yet very sensitive to outside contaminations. The entire Brāhmo brand of a movement was on the whole more

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inspired by the latter variety of an interaction and looked at the new restlessness to change with some suspicion. Madhusūdan Rāo in Orissa belonged to this variety. The main stake was religion, of course of a very personal kind and depending upon its own characteristic mode of worship.

THE PACE-SETTING FAKIRA MOHANA

Fakiramohana Senāpati (1847-1918) has been rightly called a Senāpati, the mighty forerunner, who could realize so much in a single life. Starting life almost with no resources, he achieved may times more than many of his more fortunate contemporaries. His trysts with adversity gave him a wealth of experience and enlightenment that enabled him to stand apart in literature in his use of the language as a medium of expression and in living a life that was so markedly multidimensional. He ended up his formal education in his early teens and was compelled to earn for himself. But he never gave up his zeal for studies. introduced himself to about half a dozen languages including Sanskrit and English with an effort all his own. He earned his living as teacher in an age when he should have been himself in school, but with the promises he bore within him, he endeared himself to even high officers of the Government, including John Beams who was then posted at Balasore, Fakiramohan's native place. It was also there that he came in contact with Rādhānātha Roy and the two often came together to discuss life and world of the new waves around them.

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It was the day of the missionaries and it appears that both Fakiramohana and Rādhānātha have once thought to be converted to the Christian faith. The decision was to do it together; but when Rādhānātha said he had changed his mind, Fakiramohana, as he narrates it himself also gave up the idea, because he could not muster the needed courage to do it alone. Nevertheless. it can be maintained that Fakiramohan was to a very great extent influenced by the essence of Christianity, though he did not very much approve the ways of the missionaries to preach it. That must have greatly helped him to look at his own religion and society with real and critical insight and to grow into a world-view of his own.

When Oriya language came to stay and when it was made known by government notification that school children in Orissa would get their education in Oriya and not in Bengali, Fakiramohana had won his first battle. The next task was to have text books to be used in these schools. He set his mind earnestly to it. Both Rādhanātha and Madhūsūdana were his collaborators in the same effort. The very first book that Fakiramohan wrote was a translation from Bengali of Iswarachandra Bidyāsāgara's 'Jibanacharita' a book of lives which included the lives of personalities like Newton, Galileo and Copernicus. He had the first printing machine brought to Balasore from Calcutta all the way on a bullock cart. The machine must have been a big attraction for the people of the town, it being the very first time that they saw a printing press. Fakirmohan's

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career of service took him to various parts of Orissa, specially to the feudatory states and must have enriched him with a lot of real-life experience

His very first dent was in poetry. In fact he started writing in prose virtually after he had retired from service. But poetry seems to be his real love, though most of us know him mainly by his prose. Yet, it may be submitted that we get more intimately the real inner soul of Fakirmohana in his poetry than in his prose. In prose he seems to elude us by the web of his story-telling device and makes us more conscious about the problems and situations set therein than the person who is behind all that. His poetry, on the other hand, really brings him out and tells us most about himself. Even his autobiography, even now one of the best of its kind in Oriya literature, is so full of events and happenings that we are as it were enamoured by the surface narration and have hardly any time to look into the person, the pains and the inner faiths that have contributed so much to make him what he came to become. Fakiramohan is so much in contrast to Rādhānātha and Madhusūdana in the style of poetry-making and word-use. The words are simple, the verse-making is completely free from any effort at grandeur. There is almost no attempt at saying in the *ālankāric* round-about way when it can be said plainly with simple words. Fakiramohana has once said himself that in poetry-making he had followed the foot steps of Dinakrushna and Jagannātha in Oriya literature. Rādhānātha was clearly an inspired adherant of the Bhanja attitude to poetry. That should explain.

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Fakiramohana started his adventures into poetry with translations of the Râmâyana, the Mahabharata, a few Ūpaniṣadas and the Gita. He also wrote a full poetical treatise on the message of the Buddha, called the "Bauddhābatāra kāvya." The range he covers to choose the themes for his poems will give an idea of the range of his sensibility as a poet and of the things that moved him. It also suggests that Fakiramohana was perhaps the very first in Oriya literature to have realized that there was a greater world outside and Orissa was only a part of it. He was anything but an escapist in poetry. And the satire and the awareness are permeated through everywhere, the very same elements that later on shaped the soul of his stories and his novels. Besides, the poems also convey a kind of courage which looks at the essence of things, piercing the surface variations. A few examples will make the point. In a poem, *Yama Darbāra*, 'At the court of the Lord of Death,' Fakiramohana comes out to assert that the hot-headed angry man who has only rebukes for all, a zamindar who reads a newspaper without paying for it, the schoolmaster who gives physical punishment to his pupils, the English-educated young man who neglects his own parents and chooses to live at his father-in-law's house and the poet who indulges in writing obscene poems are all eligible to be taken to task in the other world, but the hungry man who steals for having something to eat, is declared 'not guilty' at that highest court. Furher, Fakiramohan denies the gates of Heaven to the Muslim who derides the non-Muslims as *Kafir*, the Vaishnabha with the external garb and to the

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Christian who worships only Christ. To be worthy of the heavenly abode in after-life requires, according to the poet, at once in the same person, the faith as enunciated by Islam, the love as spoken of by Jesus Christ, the power of renunciation of the kind that prince Gautama had exemplified and also the bhakti that Sri Chaitanya propounded. He has described Jesus, Gautama the Buddha, Mohammed, Gūrū Nānak, Shankarāchārya, Rammohan and Sri Chaitanya as the *Saptarsi*, the seven stars forming a constellation in the fermament of spiritual life. He has even gone to the extent of saying that both Krishna and Jesus Christ are essentially two flowers on the same branch. He has named faith, renunciation, love and devotion as the four absolute real requirements for a genuine religious life.

These were in no way easy things to be uttered in those days and there is no doubt that Fakiramohan must have had to fight long and tough both within and without to come to these convictions. The convictions made him what he became as he grew. Some of his poems also reveal the keen social awareness with which Fakira mohana could sense into his time and again the themes he used in them were used for the very first time in Oriya poetry. Rādhānātha and Madhūsūdan could never come anywhere near their fringe, with of course one exception, Darabāra, which Rādhānātha wrote in his later days. In a poem on the Oriya farmer, he has lamented that the farmer produces food for all but has to remain afraid of so many masters in society. The people at the helm of affairs think about industrial

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development, some think of Swadeshi, and there are also some who say that enrichment of the mother tongue is the most important thing to do, but no one has the time to look at the plight of the farmer. The reason for it is, the farmer does not know how to make a lecture and speak in a grand demonstrable way what all he has to speak, and hence is left neglected by all concerned. Some of his poems also speak of the inequalities and the contrasts, the indifferences and the apathies among the classes in society that then existed and were being connived at. He has very bluntly cried a halt to the new civilization and the new knowledge which were then at the very doors, if they destroyed the basic values of mutuality, sharing and sympathy between man and man and fostered selfishness, self-enhancement and a life of greed. Oriya literature was never so aware about the society that was around it and to which it could have a commitment.

'Ūtkaḷa Bhramaṇam' has a unique place in Fakiramohan's achievement as a poet. One does not always see when one travels. Often people see only the surfaces and have no time to look within. Fakiramohan had a wide experience of seeing for himself the prevailing life in contemporary Orissa, its lacks and falsities, the things of the old that ridiculously strove to persist and the new beginnings that had just started to butt in, never failing to note the prospects and the perspectives that lay hidden below the surface appearances The Darabāra of Rādhānātha was written much later and thus 'Ūtkaḷa-bhramaṇam' is the first modern satire to be available in Oriya literature. It is interesting to note that Fakira-

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mohana seems to have started where Rādhānātha really ended up with. Indeed in many a respect, Fakiramohana began exactly where Rādhānātha had ended. Senapati's autobiography, the *Ātmajibana Charita*, is a very successful example of a literary piece, which gives you an eye-witness's account of the contemporary situation in Orissa as a poet and a writer, alive and alert, has viewed it.

Fakiramohana has himself said that he had written a short story, *Lachhamaniā* by name when he was in the first stage of life as a writer and that it was brought out in a local magazine in 1868. The story has not yet been traced out. If discovered it will have the credit of having been the first modern stort story in the whole of India. Fakiramohana took to writing in prose in the nineties of the last century when he had come back to Balasore having retired from service. It does not seem that he had any real plan to write after the retirement. As he says in his autobiography, Śri Biśwanātha Kara, then editor of the Ūkaḷa Sāhitya made a request to him to write some stories for the magazine and this motivated him to write again. Biśwanāthā (1864-1934) was the first essayist of modern Oriya literature having a long insight into the things that were coming and the magazine which he edited, the Ūtkaḷa Sāhitya, was the vehicle through which all the budding writers for quite a few decades really made thir dent into literature. Biśwanatha's *Bibidha Prabandha* still remains an inspiration to essayists and critics and continues to suggest the directions.

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As stated above, Fakiramohana started writing stories for Ūtkaḷa Sāhitya and in the process discovered himself to be very powerful writer of novels and stories. These stories, numbering about twenty, are great in their human-social appeal. The life that is depicted in these stories is that of the ordinary universal man; the man with all his excellences and foibles, the man whose horizons are choked by the determinations of the social predicament; the man who has to struggle his way amidst the conflicts between the old and the new, sometimes vanquished but always full of hope, full of of faith. Fakiramohana has never condemned his characters for their weaknesses and lapses, he has never wailed over the dictum that man was really so prone to these lapses. At times he hints that there is something heroic and worthy in the so-called most worthless and carves out situations when that hidden excellence reveals itself and baffles all the logic we had in condemning a man. Fakiramohana fares at his best when he exposes the hypocrisies and done-up pretensions passing for truths in our society. In the stories he deals with all that with an inner vein of humour, that illumines, elevates and pardons. Though the form of the short story in modern Oriya literature has become more complex, sophisticated and intricately designed during the later decades, one seldom finds one that surpasses Fakiramohan's in respect of awareness, width and above all the warmth with which a story-writer is bound with his creations and characters. Fakiramohan so wonderfully knew the art of identifying himself with his characters; even with those he had characterized as the most condemned, the real scums.

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From stories, Fakiramohan switched on to writing novels. Short stories, at least quite a few of them, have often been described to be snapshots which give you a cross-section of a whole that is life. A novel is of course much more than a combination of several such snapshots. With Fakiramoman, both the stories and the novels are as it were entire *gestalts*, wholes which have been dealt with in short or at length, according to the space that the author chose to allow them. Fakiramohana has written four novels in all, Lachhamā, Chha' Māāṇa Āthagūnttha, Mamū and Prāyaschitta Lachchamā is a historical novel and gives us a ruthless picture of the situation that then prevailed in Orissa when the Marathā *bargis* came to rule and run over the land. Chha' Māāṇa Āthagūnttha is a tale of a poor couple in the village set against a zamindar who had a greedy eye on a piece of land they tilled. The entire movement of events depicts the degeneration that had then set in the feudalistic social structure and the helplessness of the small man in the teeth of it. The side characters have been equally taken care of as the principal ones and the story moves along with a style and a choice of diction that is so superbly in tune with the spirit of the whole theme. The points of humour are nowhere missing, yet the tragedy goes on making itself complete with the reader, enthralled as it were, always on the side of the writer. Māmū is a story of the conflict between good and evil and the tantalizing freak of fate in which the ordinary mortal is virtually bound to move with the chance outcomes of that conflict. Prāyaschitta, the last Fakiramohana wrote in this

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category, suggests the elements of disorganization that had begun to set in the society in the fluid segments of it as a result of the new education and the new claims of the times upon man who usually finds himself in the fence and is unable to belong wholly to either. The indifference and the distantiations, the temptations in the educated individual to be only for himself and not to be anyone else's keeper, the trend towards a nuclear sort of life as a pattern of living in contrast with the other which was corporate in essence and often set aside the claims of the individual as an individual,—all these are the themes that Prāyaschitta deals with. Fakiramohan as a depicter of the human situation of his time does not take sides, explores the seemingly relevant factors making for a disorganization and presents further questions intended to probe deeper and cast more light on the problems.

Fakiramohan achieved so much against a background of all sorts of limitations. There was so little communication between the various regions in Orissa and besides, there were also distances of mind. Even the writers of one region did not know their compatriots in another region, To cite only one example : Gopāḷakrūshna, Bhima Bhoi, Fakiramohana and Rādhānātha were almost contemporaries and all were writing in Oriya. Gopāḷakrūshna was in the south, Bhima Bhoi in the western region and the other two belonged to coastal Orissa, the region which was circumstantially the most exposed to the new winds. These poets were, as it were, at various levels of creative sensibility and inspiration

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and they did not know one another. Thus oriya literature even in the second half of the 19th century did not have that cohesive oneness and was really many kinds of literature at various stages. These stages strove to thrive apart from one another as it were. Thus what Fakiromohan did achieve in spite of the many limitations was really a Senapati's job. Yet more windows had yet to be opened.

The analysis part of Fakiramohana's themes had surely that tinge of the new which could dare to look at man as man. But when it came to suggest a way out and sense a solution, the writer fell so back upon the old and thus very much defeated himself. His novel, Chha' Maāṇa Āthaġūntha seems thus to end with a clear fatalistic veneer where the evil-doers are all punished by a decree of Providence. In one of his poems, after he has compared the callous rich with a pack of frogs revelling in a puddle after a happy shower of rain, he submits that the rainy season will not be there for all time to come, that during the winter there will be no water in the puddle and thus the conceited will have their retribution. In another poem, where he decribes the injustice done to an innocent girl child by society that gets her married with a septuagenarian, he in a sort of righteous anger concludes that this injustice will be taken to task hereafter in the other world. The only departure one comes across in Lachhamā is that instead of depending on Fate, Fakiramohana keeps all his hope on the white people taking the rein of the country in their hands when

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only all the ills of the society will begin to disappear. Fakiramohana has written a poem on the Russo-Japanese war fought in 1904 but appears quite un-aware of the stir it had brought about then in the field of nationalistic sentiments in India. Instead he expresses his surprise and regret that Japan, a country professing the religion of Buddha, an apostle of nonviolence, should have taken to violence in defending itself against another state. The Indian National Congress had already been established in 1885, and in the first decade of this century there was so much of the terroristic stir across the immediate borders of Orissa in Calcutta with Sri Aurobindo as the foremost inspirer. Fakiramohan has remained away from all that, has never made a mention of all that in his works, not even in his auto biography. The first Communist revolution in Russia of 1905 goes unnoticed by him. Though the poet died iu 1918, a year after the October Revolution which has since occupied so much of the world's areas of sensibility as a heralding event, it cleany misses him. Orissa must even to that day have been a very closed world and in some respects at least, Fakiramohana was a part of it.

GANGĀ DHARA MEHER

Close to Fakiramohan in coastal eastern Orissa, we have Gangādhara Me'her (1862-1924) in the district of Sambalpur in the western, bordering Madhya Pradesh, once called the Central Provinces. When Gangādhar started with life as a full-eyed man, he really did not belong to Orissa which as a political unit was a part of

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Bengal; and, on the other side, Sambalpur was a part of the Central Provinces with its headquarters at Nagpur. Gangādhara hailed from a poor weaver family and also himself became a weaver much before he became a poet. All through his life he wove and he wrote at the same time. He so much reminds us of Kabir, the weaver who has also given us some of the best poems ever written in India. Gangādhara, similarly has given some of the very best poems to Oriya literature, poems which will always remain among the very best. Learning and erudition was not a family profession with Gangādhar. But he seems to have introduced himself to the noted Sanskrit poets of India including Kāḷidāsa already when he happened to be a novice at the loom. He had also drunk deep into the Oriya kāvyas and in all probability got his first inspiration to write poetry from his attraction for these. To dabble with as a beginning, he also had set his mind to write a kāvya called 'Rasa Ratnākara' in the ornamental style. He left the writing incomplete and gave himself to his own way into the muse. In a later year, when somebody suggested to him to write that incomplete book to completion, Gangādhara is said to have remarked that the taste of the *zeitgeist* having changed to be something else, this first kavya will definitely go against it and hence ought not to be brought out. This shows, Gangādhra had come in contact with new waves. Yet he never totally gave up the stylistic candour of the old kāvya period though he came very much away from the artificialities and over-ornateness that characterized it during the period of the court poets. With the old technique of kāvyas, he got in new

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contents and new illumination into poetry. Gangâdhara-was both classical and modern at the same time, could combine the best that was in both and yet could make a refrain of a close-to-earth-ness run all through in whatever he wrote, bringing in a warmth that enlivened you and made you feel that real poetry is the same in any case, whether it is new or it is old. Gangādhara can be best thought of as a bridge between the old that was on its way out and the new to which it was giving way, combining the tradition of the former with the promises of the latter.

Unlike Fakiramohan, Gangādhara wrote poetry almost exclusively. But his letters do show that he could also write excellent prose if he went that way. Rādhānātha was a detached man in his depths, Fakiramohana was very much a withdrawn soul at least when he wrote poetry, but Gangādhara was, in his innermost aspirations, virtually a *tapswin*. One of his major kāvya creations is 'Tapaswini', where he has sung about Sita during her second period of exile at Vālmiki's hermitage. The other kāvyas from the poet's pen are: Praṇaya Ballari, Indūmati and Kichakabadha. His poems have been collected into several handy volumes, 'Ūtkaḷa-lakshmi' and 'Arghyathāḷi' being the most known among them. Some of his songs have the power and the sublimity to take the reader right into the highest heights of his heart where he is at once deep, wide and full of beatitude. That literature and the pursuit of poetry can be a means in one's inner realizations and bring about the intended liberations has been more

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exemplified in the life of Gangādhara Me'he'r in Oriya literature than anywhere else. That literature is a flowering up of the realization of a person's total life and its aspirations has also been best exemplified in Gangādhara.

Gangādhara was anything but an escapist, and in this sense he was modern. He was very much on this earth and also sang so variedly about it. He was very vividly aware of the new movements of thought that was in the air around him and wrote a whole collection of poems in simple and suggestive Oriya for the peasants and the farmers, called the 'Krușak Sangita' His satire in a poem titled 'They too do pass as the most honourable' has also a relevance to-day and carries very much of the modern temper in it. Gangādhara's was a time when most of the poets including the most celebrated had to depend upon the good-will of the local kings and have been thus by necessity called upon to write eulogies for them. That of course was very much in keeping with a tradition that had long prevailed in Orissa. Gangādhara was a bright exception to all that anachronism. Though he was poor and had to often exert hard for a livelihood, he never sought favour with any of the kings of his time. When he had attained fame as a poet, several kings were really willing to help him materially. Even a chief in a feudatory state in the neighbourhood wanted to adopt him as his court-poet, but Gangādhara declined all these offers and remained free and clean. These were not at all familiar examples in his day.

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Gangādhara had a unique style of his own in poetry-making. It was not something which he had earned for himself through studies. borrowings and absorptions. He had come to his style through a sense of sheer love and dedication to his craft as a writer. The evolution was a part of his very convictions in life and his commitments to them. Once Rādhānātha Roy, the senior poet and much better placed than he in life had in a letter to him regretted that the kings did not so frequently and readily patronize the poets in Orissa as in the case of the literatures in other languages in India. But Gangādhara had never to complain against anyone at any time. Literature for him was the very *tapasyā* of his life, a path of ascent and thus had no time to sulk because of the hurdles and the limitations.

Radhānātha and Fakiramohan were lovers in the first phase of their craft as writers. But each of them for reasons different in each case ended with a note of alienation and estrangement. The course of Gangādhara was a much different one. Alienation was not his mettle. He was never imprisoned within the private world of his own small life and never had an inclination to look at the larger world through that world darkly. As he advanced in years, experience and depth, he seems to have ever expanded himself and ascended step by step to the summits. Yet he never lost the ground under his feet. He happens to have struck deeper roots into his moorings than any of his giant contemporaries and had aspired higher, always contented but aspiring. In any period to come in Oriya literature, Gangādhara

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will always remain one of our very own; his works will always carry at once a freshness and yet a familiarity for us.

The tract that Gangādhara Meher belonged to was not a part of Orissa at that time. The new waves that were making themselves felt in the coastal disticts had virtually not reached as far as Sambalpur. For that to be possible, they had to pierce through the dark sanctuaries of the then feudatory states and then to reach Sambalpur, Yet Gangādhara, born in a remote village could make it possible for him to stand up entirely with his own efforts, see the world around him with his own eyes, initiate himself into literature to look into life and the world of beauty with such receptiveness and candour : that is the foremost message Gangādhara continues to give us as a poet and as a fellow-traveller. You do not usually find a second to persons like him.

When one looks out of this galaxy of four to assess their near contemporaries, one also finds a few others. All of them did do their part in helping Oriya literature pass through this pre-take off stage The very first two names that come to mind are Nandakishore Bal̤ (1875-1928) and Chintamani Mohanty (1876-1943). Both of them hailed from the coastal tracts and thus supplemented to the best of their efforts to what was already ushered in in the field of Oriya literature by the great trio, Rādhānātha, Fakiramohana and Madhusūdana; they were sort of variations to the same main theme. Quantitatively seen, Chintamaṇi has really written a

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a huge mass, but he must be indeed unfortunate in that he remained always in the shadow of Rādhānātha and Fakiramohana, and for many of his time, seemed to be producing repetitions. Nobody has as yet gone into the bulk of his writings with due sympathy and interest, so strong is the prejudice in them that the works present nothing new and different. In addition to the about a dozen kāvyas, Chintamani has also tried his hand at writing novels and has written about half a dozen of them. But those days were so much taken by storm by Fakiramohana that people did not have the mind to make a comparative assessment of the two. Of all the writers of last one century in Orissa, Chintamaṇi is perhaps the least studied, though his works together may be the most voluminous. Another reason for his not being so much appreciated may be the fact that for serveral years of his working life, he was in south Orissa, at that time outside the real administrative unit to the north. Lately, in 1970 a publisher has brought out his autobiography, 'Jibanapanjikā', which is an interesting piece in many respects. The style is very personal and also attractive, and acquaints one with the literary and political situation of Orissa of those days. It may well be hoped that as more and more people go through this book, they will find a reason to go back to his kāvyas and novels and thus be able to fix a definite place for him in spite of the galaxy of which he appears to have been a minor star.

Nandakishore Baḷa was educated in English language and literature and held a good job in the

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educational service of the division of Orissa under the British. His contact with English literature gave him an inspiration to bring Orissa's village life into Oriya literature. He put his hand at all the possible branches of literary writing, but he seems to have shone at his best in poetry, specially when he is describing folk life. This identification with village themes gave him a medium and a style which was pastoral and rural. As a high official himself, Nandakishore must have felt very much recompensed and fulfilled because he could be so much with rural life through the things he so loved to write. His two major collections of poems are 'Pallichitra' and 'Nirjharini.' He has also a sheaf of stories to his credit and a novel, called 'Kanakalatā.' In this novel all the other elements of a novel have been so enthusiastically lost sight of because of the writer's interest at bringing the rural details into the novel. These details in a novel sometimes remind Rādhānātha's love for long lists of details in his poetical works. One gets an impression after reading Nandakishore that there was already some disorganization set in in the village life of Orissa and hence, as poets in this predicament almost everywhere, Nandakishore had a desire to preserve all the wealth of it in his poems. He is angry at those who helped in this process of disorganization. Nandakishore has written some of the finest poems for children in Oriya which have remained ever fresh since then and the style of which continues to inspire many a writer of simple children's poems even to-day. Last, but not the least, Nandakishore introduced some critical temper in the field of literary criticism in Orissa. Prior to him

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criticisms were in the main eulogies and tended to speak of an author as very great because he happened to be our own. Nandakishore gave an indication of the other possibility. His discussions on the poetry of Rādhānātha and Madhūsūdana had ample relevance and inspired literary criticism to go the other way. The conflict between the two ways still exists.

Pandit Gopinatha Nanda (1869-1924) belonged to Paralakhimedi in south Orissa now, then outside the the political boundaries of Orissa. Gopinatha Nanda was a pandit no doubt, but he was also a pioneer. His etymological dictionary of the Oriya language and 'Odiā Bhāsātattwā, a work on the philology of Oriya language are pioneer works in the respective fields. He also wrote very illuminating interpretations in prose of the then three great books available in Oriya literature, the Mahābhārata of Sāralā Dāsa, the Rāmāyan of Balarāma Dāsa and the Bhāgabata of Jagannāth Dāsa. The commentaries are serious studies into the characters of Oriya Rāmāyana and Mahābhārata and a further probe into the philosophic message of the Bhāgabata. Without minimizing the importance of these works in valuable interpretation and study, it may be submitted that the style in which the treatises have been written is in great contrast with the original works of which they are the interpretations. The originals were written, in a very simple language so that all people could understand the real heart of the presentations therein. The interpretations of Gopinatha Nanda were more intended for the pundits and the scholarly who perhaps would

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not go into the originals written in so lay a language. The sentences in the interpretations have a staccato atmosphere around them and suggest that the scholarly people, though they had reconciled themselves to the fact that Oriya language had come to stay did not want to stoop so low to reconcile themselves with the prose style for which Fakiramohana had set the pattern. Gopinatha also translated a few Sanskrit Kāvyas and dramas into the Oriya language, including Kālidāsa's Me'ghadūta. But the fact remains that he and the kindred camp he represented had their first love for Sanskrit and wrote in Oriya to demonstrate to the common people the excellence of that language.

The two other names we can take up with the same breath as it were, are Śasibhūsana Roy (1876-1953) and Mrūtyūnjaya Rath (1878-1923). The first of these was the son of Rādhānātha, the great poet of Orissa and had also inherited so much of the father in terms of a literary style and choice of themes. Sashibhūsana wrote prose in a poetic style and had a great knack for descriptive details as his father. He has the credit of having written the first travelogue in Oriya language and the book 'Dākshinātya Bhramaṇa' is a case in point. Two of his books, Ūtkaḷa Prakrūti and Ūtkaḷa Rūtūchitra, are descriptions of the beauty of nature as the author has happened to have experienced in Orissa. Two things become very clear from these writings so swollen with a sense of nostalgia in it things seem to appear extravagantly beautiful because they happened to be in one's own land. Secondly, in spite of the sincerity of

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the inspiration in such a writing, there was a lack of perspective and therefore also of proportion. Fine treatments in their time, they will not that much fascinate a reader of our time, though the latter may be as much a lover of nature as any one belong to Sasibhūsana's time.

Pandit Mrūtyūnjaya Ratha had won laurels in his study of Sanskrit when he was a student, but later took to Oriya as a medium of writing. His style was of course simple, clear, precise, unlike his contemporary Gopinātha Nanda. Above anything else, he will be remembered for his neat biographical essays, principally about the poets including Śāraḷa Dāsa. He also brought out an edited version of Kabisūrya's poetical compositions. His 'Prabandhapātha', a book of essays meant to be be used in schools has also its literary diversions, giving us a picture of the native life and culture. At the subconscious level perhaps, it was a silent protest against what all was intruding into the traditional patterns of society, killing much of its natural wholeness and gait. Mrūtyūnjaya has surely made his share of contribution to the development of Oriya prose which was still struggling to explore its full potency. The others who come in the same line of prose-writers are Pandit Niḷamaṇi Bidyāratna, Jaḷandhara Deba and Mohinimohana Senāpati. The last two introduced some rationalistic anti-traditional thinking into Oriya literature, at times appearing as iconoclasts shattering the pet and familiar idols people had taken as absolute moulds.

It was Gopāḷa Chandra Praharāja (1872-1945) who followed consciously the prose-style of Fakiramohana

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after him. He introduced the belles-lettres style of prose-writing into Oriya literature. But his very first work which caught notice was Ūtkaḷa Kāhāṇi, a collection of folk-tales of Orissa. John Beams before him had made some beginning in the field in an essay he had written and got published in 1872. It has been said that some of Praharāja's stories were translated into Bengalee and appreciated there. He wrote a few literary essays in criticism, including one on Fakiramohana. But his real field was satire ventilated through his works of belles-lettres. The satire was always resplendent with an inner-directedness that really elevated than condemned. Examples are : Bhāgabata Tungire Sandhyā, Bāi Māhānti Pānji, Nanānka Bastāni and a few others. Only a master in the use of words could command such a humour expressed in words. All the three books named above are also critical slants about the new contaminations that were so much round the corners everywhere, about the follies and the excesses, always voicing an indirect note of warning that blind acceptance was sure to be suicidal. The old, they indend to submit, need not be totally obliterated in order to give place to the new. The roots, the eternal values and the permanent traditions giving us our own distinctness ought to be preserved and then only the assimilating process will be healthy and on a real life-promoting base. The critical satires, though sparing none, have been in the main constructive and seem in a great way of having taken further, after Fakiramohana, this particular style of saying things and suggesting alternatives. The real contribution for which Praharāja

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will be remembered longest in Oriya literature is his Pūrna Chandra Bhāṣākoṣa, a dictionary cum encyclopaedia in the Oriya language running into seven volumes. The voluminousness of the work has not yet been surpassed. Oriya literature has remained very poor in giving a literary expression to real humour and on this context Praharāja's contribution will remain to be of great value· for many years to come·

BEGINNING OF THE ORIYA DRAMA

By the end of the nineteenth century, there was already a stage in Calcutta in the European sense of the term and plays were being written accordingly to be staged there. This had its influence in Orissa and dramas to fit into this new stage were written gradually. The process was more precisely like this : the Bengalees who were then at Cuttack being employed in the Government services had Bengali dramas staged for their own entertainment. This must have been a challenge and spur for the potential drama-writers of Orissa, one of whom has clearly mentioned how sick they felt when they looked at the Bengali plays being staged. After Jagamohana Lālā'a 'Bābāji', Rāmashankara's 'Kānchi Kābe'ri' was a real drama to be enjoyed on a Calcutta-like stage and that served as a great fillip to the writing of many more dramas. This new mode also got its patronizers before long and many rajahs in the feudatory states got themselves very interested in it. Kāmapāḷa Mishra was another drama written in the line. A very notable name is Bhikāri Charaṇa Pattanāyaka (1878-1962) hailing from

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Cuttack, who took to historical and social themes and thus extended the scope of the drama as an art form which was almost exclusively limited to mythological and moralistic themes 'Sansārachitra' and 'Kataka Bijaya' are among the most known of his dramas.

Orissa was very well acquainted with the tradition of drama since Jayade'ba and Rāmānanda Pattanāyaka who of course wrote in Sanskrit. These dramas were staged in temples and in all probability everybody did not have an access to witness them The tradition died out after the Muslims took Orissa and especially as Sanskrit gradually withdrew giving more and more place to the language of the people, and a characteristic drama tradition developed quite behind the notice of what was happening in the small islands of erudition The songs of the kāvya writers of the middle ages provided the music for it and the Gotipūa tradition of dance, a degeneration of the classical Odissi form at the root of it catered to the dance aspect. And a whole tradition grew up in the villages, quite on its own, but at times with patronization of the rich Zamindars, the local counterpart of the erstwhile rajahs. The tradition had various patterns of expression in the various regions of Orissa and had various names like the Laḷitā Pālā in north Orissa, the Śabara Līḷā of the Sambalpur region and the very intriguing Mogal Tāmasā of Bhadrak. The last has its dialogue part written in a medium. which is an agglomeration of Oriya and Persian (Ūrdū for that matter), but the innovator of it happens to be a Hindu. All these fragments of a tradition soon got crystalised

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into a *jātrā* pattern and we have a few names belonging to this field who have done tremendous service in the way of folk entertainment through the jātra pieces they have written. The first is Jagannātha Pāṇi of Bhadrak, then comes Krūṣnakānta Dāsa who belonged to the same place and last, towering above them all is Baiṣhnaba Paṇi (1882-1956) Baishnaba had very little formal education, but had drunk deep into the musical tradition of Orissa. His themes are various, mythological as well as social. His dialogues are conversations-cum-songs and his dramas fit very well to the requirements of an open stage, really no stage to be precise, where a patch is left in the middle for the enactment of the play with the musical party to a fringe and an audience forming an ocean of heads come to witness and participate in the extravaganza for the whole night That was really an experience and sought to provide everything one wanted as a spectator. Lately Baishnaba Paṇi's jātrās have found a place in the radio and are also being staged by school children even in the urban areas The performance has lost a lot of its genuine charm in this process of expansion Sophistications have also crept in.

With Baishnaba Paṇi, we have Bāḷakrūṣna Mohanty also having a rival *jatra* party and composing dramas for it The whole tradition is fast on the wane as the villagers are more and more prone to imitate the urban styles and their associated gimmicks. The people who have migrated from the villages and built up a sort of semi-urban subculture in the towns seem to look

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down upon the people who are still left in the villages. Thus when they incorporate into their own schedule of entertainment a pattern which grew up in the villages, it never remains the same any more and at times smacks of a caricaturing act. These lapses, however, are a part of the very process of grab.

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CHAPTER VIII

AN AGE OF ASPIRATIONS

With all its fervour and ferments, Orissa entered into the twentieth century with Madhūsūdana Dāsa (1848-1934), now called the *Ūtkaḷagaūraba* or the pride of Orissa. Madhūsūdana had been to the west; the vigour and the vitality that lay behind the European enterprise and European culture must have really fascinated and surprised him. When he came back to Orissa, he came with the conviction that Orissa could also be changed into a prosperous land if there are people in it who have a conviction to make Orissa great and prosperous. Madhūsūdana could see how backward and unenterprising Orissa was in comparison with the neighbouring states, especially Bengal. He was a bar-at-law by profession and also a convert to the Christian faith But whatever he became and wherever he was, his heart was with Orissa about which he had a dream. He was perhaps the first in Orissa who really could think so totally about Orissa and hence his influence and leadership was then felt almost in every area of Orissa's life and in everything that happened then. Madhūsūdana was the inevitable leader. He thought and led, Orissa followed.

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Madhūsūdana had also as large a heart as his head. He has left us about half a dozen poems, where he almost literally knocks at the door of whosoever then felt himself to be a son of the soil and hence realised that he had to do something for the uplift of a homeland. He laments how most people in Orissa sought for their own small gains and did not have any heart for the whole that Orissa was. Perhaps because he was ready to do so much for Orissa and hence also expected that others should be equally ready and dedicated, that Madhūsūdana felt himself always so much alone in the whole fray and there was always something tragic in him that tormented him. There was also a built-in sort of restlessness in him that kept him occupied with the immediate and the exigent and often he did not have the time to go into the deeper configuration of causes that was responsible for the condition that was. Madhūsūdana's very first endeavour was to bring together all the Oriya-speaking people into an administrative whole by the creation of a separate province uniting all the Oriya-speaking tracts. He perhaps thought regionalism was an essential first-step to nationalism and the very immediacy of the issues he was grappling with, often led him to think that regionalism was nationalism. The platform Madhūsūdana built for achieving the aims was called the Ūtkaḷa Sammilani.

In his keenness to solve Orissa's problems as Orissa's problems only, Madhūsūdana as a rule seemed

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to overlook that Orissa was a part of a bigger whole. He was very much oblivious about the hindering factors that an imperialism had beset India with and was also much outside the new forces that were surging up in India in the form of a national movement to free India from the British yoke. Thus, his leadership worked very much in keeping Orissa outside the mainstream of the upheavals whose hour had come. A protest came and it came from Utkalamani Gopabandhu Dāsa. Gopabandhū (1877-1928) started with the Ūtkala Sammilani, he was inspired by the great Madhūsūdana no less than the others in the camp. But that he had a very different eye to look at things came to be felt already by the end of the first decade of the century. The parting of the ways came by the end of the second decade when in 1919 in a session of that august body at Cuttack, Gopabandhu made the humble suggestion that in Orissa, "We were first of all men, then Indians and only last of all Oriyas." These words were as it were being heard for the first time in Orissa and must have been received by the seniors with great consternation. Mahatma Gandhi was already on the Indian political scene and a new phase was soon to begin in the national movement to free India from alien domination. Satyāgraha and non-co-operation and Swarajya were soon going to become the most familiar words, Orissa could no more remain isolated. The leadership was thus no longer with the Ūtkala Sammilani, because the latter had never assessed its articles of faith within that larger perspective. The inadequacy proved that it had no real utility any more and had to give way to the new aspirations. Gopabandhū urged that the

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Ūtkaḷa Sammilani should merge itself into the Indian national movement as political freedom at the national level was the first requisite. With him, began quite another step and another phase in the regenerational life of Orissa, including Oriya literature There came a qualitative leap in the very aspirations.

GOPABANDHŪ DĀSA

Mahatma Gandhi's leadership was never exclusively political. In fact the tradition of leadership during the regenerating years in India beginning with the second half of the 19th century was never exclusively political, neither was it exclusively religious. It was total leadership and the scope of its appeal was as deep as national life itself. It had a distinct dimension in literature also. It also touched the area of education and of social reconstruction. The very grass roots of a people were sought to be touched and built anew. Gandhi, Rabindranatha, Sri Aurobindo and Swami Vivekananda were all of them not leaders in a particular field, they were national leaders in that all of them touched and sought to rebuild the entire life of the people of this country on a new base. They had all of them been very much influenced by the west. In fact, all of them combined in them the best that was in the East as well as in the West. Thus all of them, whatever their immediate field of activity might have been, had education as an item in their plan and they also influenced contemporary Indian literature in a great way. Gopabandhu's was the personification of this challenge

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and this response at the Orissa level. He was also the personification of that leadership and that total perspective in Orissa. There is no doubt that his presence was anything but welcome by the then existing leadership in Orissa which thought only of Orissa, closed and cramped with all the appended fumings and flurry, including the very seniormost stalwarts. Gopabandhū was the leader and the precursor who brought Orissa into the inspirational map of India. A new level of encounters became the lot of Orissa after he had come to the scene and taken over as the helmsman.

Gopabandhu did in no way give up the design of the Utkaḷa Sammilani to fight for a separate province and unite all the Oriya-speaking fragments in the outlying areas into a homogenous political and cultural whole. It was he who did so much to establish schools in the Oriya speaking areas outside Orissa so that the people there do not lose contact with their language and thus forget it. And when Orissa did become a separate province in 1936, both Modhūsūdana and Gopabandhū were not there to see the culmination of a long effort, but Orissa remembered both of them as the ones who had worked for it more remarkably than anyone else. Gopabandhu was equally aware of the backwardness of the people of Orissa and was their best friend in times of helplessness like floods, cyclones and the like. His life almost became a legend in the story of bringing succour to the afflicted during the calamities. It was Gopabandhu who more than any other person brought the

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miserable plight of the people of Orissa to the notice of the power that be and dragged the echelons down to see things for themselves and sanction the necessary amelioration. As a member in the Governor's council, Gopabandhu was the most genuine nominee from Orissa, because it was through his pleadnigs there that the real Orissa was represented, Orissa that had yet to come of age both economically and politically. Gopabandhu, by his very sincerity and readiness to serve, caught the notice of no less a leader than Lala Lajpat Rai and with his assistance started a newspaper in Orissa. There were of course already many pioneering efforts at journalism before the *Samāja* the newspaper, came to being, but *Samāja* symbolizes ā real take-off in Orissa and indicates how wide and all-reaching the scope of journalism could be. The *Samāja* started as a weekly with Gopabandhu as its editor and soon became a daily.

The last but in no way the least that had Gopabandhu's attention drawn towards it was education. The schooling that was then doled out to some in society was no education and Gopabandhu sought to provide an alternative to it in Orissa. In this regard he aligned himself with the great leaders of India of those days who had also sought to provide their own alternatives in education. With a small band of young people inspired by his personality and by his ideals, he started a school at Satyabādi in the district of Puri. It was a school with a difference, modelled very much along the national sch ols in India which were later established as a part of the total programme

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of the nationalist movement. Tagore's Santiniketan was the only existing model before Gopabandhū which must have helped him a lot in getting at a frame for a school of his own dreams. The old ideals of the Indian *ashram* education must also have given him real insights. The children at the Satyabādi school sat outside for their classes in the open under the shadow of the *bakul* groves in the very midst of nature. All the children lived in the hostel of the school in close contact and communication with their teachers, who were with them for all the hours of their waking life. They were with the children in the classroom, while praying, in all sorts of social work and service in the neighbouring area and thus it was the living contact with the fully sympathetic and co-operating, more experienced adult in the person of the teacher that mattered most in the education and growing up of the children who came to this school. Individual development in the silence of a conducive natural and human environment and a social and a national awareness with a growing sense of commitment to it were the basic points of emphasis in the scheme of education that Gopabandhū introduced at Satyabādi. Before long it caught the attention of all concerned in Orissa and visitors to it included also Fakirmohana, the forerunner of so much that had then been achieved in Orissa. As the years glided by, Gopabandhū was more and more in the very fray of the national movement, courted imprisonment and his budget did not have sufficient time left for the school. The whole school campus also was soon involved in the freedom struggle and the educational experiment had to

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close up. It is interesting to note that once again in 1928, Gopabandhu wanted to come back to Satyabadi leaving all other work of his that had kept him occupied outside. It seems he realized the new school was the most important theme of all in the total sphere of his endeavours and activities and had made a comprehensive plan for an educational programme both in the school and in the surrounding community. Gopabandhu of course did not live long enough to see his plan further realized. He died in 1928.

THE SATYABĀDI GROUP

Together with the Samāja, Gopabandhu was also the editor of a literary magazine, the Satyabādi, named after the very place which was the hub of all his activities. He and most of his colleagues in the school were writers. And in this way a whole circle of writers grew up around the journal, and very reasonably in the history of Oriya literature, they are known as the 'Satyabādi' group of writers. Some students of Oriya literature even go as far as to call this whole period in the literature of Orissa as the "Satyabādi period." Besides Gopabandhu, the group constituted Pandit Niḷakantha Dāsa, Pandit Godābarisa Mishra, Achārya Harihara Dāsa and Pandit Krupāsindhu Mishra. After the five saint-poets of the sixteenth century, some enthusiastically name also these five comrades-in-arms as the Panchasakha of the Satyabadi period. All of them happened to have been Brahmins and came of the Brahmin *sasāns* round about Puri,

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where the inhabiting Brahmins have been traditionally looked upon as the highest and the most sanctified in in the Brahmin hierarchy of grades and shades. These Brahmins had been the most vocal in opposing Englsih education. Even the switch over to pen and paper from the palmleaf and the style pen had got quite some resistance from their quarters. To have a school against this background was quite a venture and most people must have looked upon these pioneers with very suspicious eyes. For the pioneers, it was always a going against the stream and they seemed to be perfectly conscious of what they were doing. When the realization of a nationhood begins from the very grassroots and has people at the forefront, you have always the traditional e'lite that opposes. Gopabandhu and his associates took to literature against a backdrop as this. These years in the history of Oriya literature can be called its trepidation years which signify one of its most formative periods. Oriya literature for the first time in its journey forward became consciously forwardlooking, sensed life in its as total a dimension as possible. Literature came nearest to life with the whole gamut of its aspirations, and it was life, life that was, is and might be, that inspired literature more than enything else.

The Satyabādi was meant to be a forum with a difference and thus started with an entirely different frame of reference. In one of the earliest editorials Gopabandhū happened to write for it, it was stated very clearly : "A common Indian tradition can be traced as flowing as a subcurrent in all the regional literatures

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of India. Only when all these regional literatures come together and nearer all the provinces will then come to feel underneath their own literatures the force and the significance that is in the literature of India." A statement in this vein had not been heard in Orissa since Pyārimohana's days. Gopabandhu writes in another place, "The truths that have been discovered in different times by the insight of the whole of humanity expressed in various countries and various regions, the beauty that has come to light by the realizations of the entire humanity, the light that has been the legacy of the whole of human intellect and the ideals that man everywhere has been able to exemplify,-all these have to be incorporated into Oriya literature and transformed into its treasures." These things must have seemed to be heard for the first time in Orissa, inducing everyone concerned then to believe that literature was by the very scope of its inspirations and aspirations had to be coterminous with the life of humanity. The foremost purpose behind launching a journal like the Satyabādi, as the sponsors themselves had declared, was to awaken a spirit of criticism in literature. To be sentimental was perhaps the style of the day aginst which Satyabādi came and made its presence felt.

The Satyabādi school consists mainly of the young idealists who had come to serve the interests of a new education which was meant to build up a new society and hence a new attitude of consecration towards life. Gopabandhu wrote both prose and poetry. He wrote prose many times more than poetry

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His prose was for all intents and purposes meant to be journalistic but in fact gave a new dimension to journalism and to Oriya prose-writing as well. All that he had written in the columns of the Samāja and the Satyabādi. All that prose has now been classified and compiled into more than half a dozen volumes by the people who still run the Samāj, the largest-circulated daily in Orissa to-day. The style of Gopabandhu's prose is simple and goes from the heart and is meant to convince the heart. There is a certain charm that is perhaps unique for a person who has convictions himself and yet does not want to impose them on others. One feels dignified himself as one reads Gopabandhu's dignified prose and is inspired to look into his own faculty of reasoning which has its real roots in the heart. Gopabandhu has reached a new high in the evolution of Oriya prose and even to-day the prose several Oriya prose writers write does bear his impress. Gopabandhu's poetical works consist of less than a dozen very small volumes and the best of them were written when he was in prison. The earliest volume is Abakās'a Chintā, poems written at leisure, which have beautiful lyrics weaving out brilliant creations of poetic sensibility out of very insignificant things or happenings. Looking at things most people would have simply missed, he takes you to heights which one would never imagine were involved there. The Dharmapada is the story of the legendary boy behind the completion of the Konarka sun-temple and describes how he sacrificed himself in the interests of the many. The appeal was most intended to bring

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home to us the fact that the interests of the individual has to subserve those of the whole community and of the country because the former depends upon the latter's wellbeing for his own surival. Kārākabitā is song from the prison and Bandirā Ātmakathā is also the poet's outpourings for his own people when he himself is in prison. All this is genuine poetry which is capable of deep communication and touches the very hearts of the readers though written so unassumingly and does not intend to captivate you with any extra glare of poetic craftsmanship. You need real convictions to write good poetry, this is Gopabandhū's principal message through the poems he has written. Thus one does not wonder to see that many of the lines of Gopabandhu's poems are often cited from memory by young and old and that demonstrates the pride they have in inheriting Gopabandhu as a legacy.

Nīḷakantha Dāsa (1884—1967) lived the longest of all the notable personalities of the Satyabādi school and his most important creations were written after he had left Satyabādi. To start with, he rewrote the Mahābhārata, the Rāmāyana and the Bhāgabata for young children and also produced an edited version of the Gita with a long erudite introduction, abounding in scholarship. His essays were youthful, vigorous and nonconformistic and created some stir in the contemporary society of conservatives. Among his kāvyas, the most successful to be noted is his Koṇārke', a dream-composition running into a couple of hundred pages. The style is staccato and archaic, even though the very stuff of the descrip-

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tions is a rapturous flight in imagination, a flight into the past and into the glory that was Orissa. If the intention were to arouse national sentiment, the purpose has perhaps been served better already by one of Nilakantha's contemporaries in Padmacharana Pattanāyaka (1885-1956) who wrote in a simpler style but with a deeper commitment to poetic sensibility. Nilakantha has a ceremonious structure in his poetry no doubt, but Padmacharana is nearer to heart, more easily understood, even more convincing, because the sentiments are also more genuine. One has reasons to infer that the real field of Nilākantha was prose and not poetry. And most of the poetry that Nilakantha has given to us tends to express what may be called the *hubris* aspect of dealing with one's culture and one's past. Whenever national sentiments chose to digress into all sorts of overstatements, they loved to stray into a sort of *hubris*. One can compare the poetry of Gopabandhū with that of Nilakantha to get at the point.

The main credit of Pandit Nilakantha was the editing of the Nababhārata, which he started in 1934, after having left the school at Satyabādi. After Sahakāra, started by Bālakrūshna Kara, Nababhārata was the only literary magazine of Orissa at that time. What was more, the latter was more open to progressive writing and had a greater critical outlook. Nilakantha's 'Odiā Sāhityara Kramaparināma', a treatise on history of Oriya literature was a pioneer complete work on the subject, but the mood was more biased than critical. The author was perhaps more keen about

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establishing his own pet adumbrations about the evolution of culture and literature in Orissa than presenting any thought that could stimulate further thought. The very style was anything but critical. To end up with a long life of activity, Nilakantha also produced an autobiography which depicts his motley career in its various circuits with always himself as the main person in the play. His compatriot at Satyabadi, Pandit Godābariśa Mishra has also an autobiography written towards the fag end of his years (1886-1956) Godābariśa was a poet first and foremost. His poems are short, full of pathos and feeling, simple and go straight into the heart. They do not have that archaicness so common with the ambitious Kāvya writers. In the realm of poetry-writing, Godābariśa stands nearest to Padmacharana, and in his intensity of appeal, nearest to Gopabandhu. He may be named as the first poet to have taken up stories as themes for his poems. The compilation 'Ālekhikā is an illustration for it.

Godābariśa started writing already when he was very young. The two dramas of his young age are Purūsottama Deba and Mūkunda Deva, intended to arouse the sentiments of the readers to the heroic royal years of Orissā's past by dramatizing local history and thus giving the past a connotation that has relevance for the present. 'Chayanikā', Kiśalaya and Kalikā are the names of his other collections of poems. Godābariśa had also made very commendable attempts at prose writing. This includes both short stories and a few novels written in the shadow of famous books in English. After the stories of Victor Hugo's 'Les

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miserables' Charles Dickens's 'A Tale of two cities' and Stevenson's Dr. Jekyl and Mr. Hyde, Godābariśa wrote Abhāgini, 1817 and Ghatāntara. These trans-creations are as involving as the original ones. In this field he was with Nilakantha Dāsa also who had made, in poetry of course, very readable Oriya versions of the Enoch Arden and of another book too. Krūpa-sindhu Mishra (1886-1926) died young, but he had shown signs of his knack for history already in his first years as a writer. Besides the many historical essays he wrote, his 'Bārabāti' and 'Konarka' show ably the potentials he had for the study of history. His book on the history of Orissa has now been posthumously published. Achārya Harihara Dāsa was a very successful teacher and silent imbiber of the principal inspirations that moved Gopabandhū's innovations at the Satyabadi school. He has left a few translations, including those of the Bhagabadgitā and the Chhāndogya Ūpanisad.

After Gopabandhū's death in 1928, the Satybādi endeavour also came to an end. Both Nilakantha and Godābariśa tried their mettle in so many other fields of Orissa public life, but were nowhere near the track to which they had been inspired by Gopabandhu They deeply in politics, were in the hostile camp when the last fights for national freedom were being fought with the British. Their activities suggests very much that they had not really found out the real and stable centres of their own and the only centre that had attracted them was that of Gopabandhū, and when the latter was

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no more, they went their own ways, centreless, and must have been very sad souls within in spite of the sound and fury they happened to have smouldered up outwardly. Nevertheless, when everything has been spoken about these stars who had not found their real orbits as it were, Nilakantha and Godābaris'a will always be remembered in Oriya literature as writers with so much vigour and substance.

Gopabandhū and the literature of his age gave a new dimension to the concept and cultivation of nationalism in Orissa. Nationalism is never a sort of narrow provincialism,'—Gopabandhū once so valiantly wrote. This had a special significance in that when Gopabandhū came to the public scene, love for Orissa seemed to conspire against the love for the country that was India and the love and a sense of dedicatedness for the nation that was only the Indian nation. Even in those days of the very first beginnings, Gopabandhū advocated in favour of adopting a single script in all the Indian languages, because that would greatly facilitate inter-regional communication and do much towards national integration. Of course he did not say that the mother tongues should be given up; in fact he always very strongly pleaded that the mother tongues had to be the medium of instruction at all levels. But he pleaded for a common script, that was for him the Dēvnāgari script, for all the Indian languages. There was so much affinity between these languages, he said, that with a common script, Indians wheresoever in the country will feel a nearness to one another through knowing one

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another's literature. It is said that Gopabandhū has left his diaries after him, an exhaustive work running into several volumes in manuscript. They are yet to be brought to light. And when they are published, they will reveal so much of the events and achievements of Gopabandhū and his worthy associates.

Gopabandhū falls directly in line with Pyārimohana Ācharya in respect of his innermost aspirations and allegiances, Both of them wanted so much to change, so much to be rediscovered and renovated at the roots and so much to be pioneered as alternatives. Their roots were deeply in Orissa but their many windows through which they had the courage to look out into the world-waves of their time made them so radically different from their contemporaries. Both of them were honest, to themselves and honest to their callings, both in literature and in public life. Both of them wanted to convince all concerned that Orissa was not an island to flourish in isolation and with a sense of righteous indignation towards the others who were around. Both so much brought out the universal dimensions involved in the forces that seemed to have a local simmer only. When the great October Revolution took place in Soviet Russia and almost a new epoch began in the annals of man, it was Gopabandhū, perhaps, then the only person in Orissa who took note of it and sensed the deep significances of it. He wrote a full editorial about it in the Samāja. In the same columns he described Lenin as a great soul when the latter died in 1924 and wrote, " Of all the great persons who

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have come in the history of mankind through all its ages and are being remembered in great esteem for having ushered in great and epoch-making changes in human society, the foremost are Mahatma Gandhi and the great Lenin." He suggests Romain Rolland and Rene' Fuellop-Mueller when he says thus. Thus the destiny of the entire universe of mankind and the forces that were on the horizons as the next alternatives, these were the themes of Gopabandhū, in whatever he did and whatever he wrote. His aspirations were too big and too human to remain confined within the parochial limits of a provincial endeavour. Gopabandhū still remains the greatest challenge for the people of Orissa, also one of their greatest inspirations. Orissa would have been very different had Gopabandhū lived another few decades longer and led the Indian struggle in Orissa to its fruition in 1947.

The associates of Gopabandhū drifted away from the Satyabādi endeavour and the Satyabādi dream after Gopabandhū's death. They perhaps had their own dreams, or, more correctly said, had no dreams at all and hence revolved till their very end round their own seekings. Satyabādi soon became an object for recollection as it were, a place reminding one of what one was, providing some sentimental food to those who have a knack at being satisfied with that much only. Lakshmikānta Mahapatra from Bhadrakh may be taken as the real person who took up the inspiration from Gopabandhū, at least in the field of literature. Lakshmikānta (1888-1953) came from an aristocratic

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zamindar family, and as he puts it in one of his reminiscences; 'Having spent my childhood in a family of high status at Balasore, I had been used by early nurture to think very low of the Oriyas and of the Oriya language. When I was at Cuttack, I came across Gopabandhū's 'Abakaśa Chintā.' The poems, each of them, kindled a new fire in my adolescent sensibility and I could not wait any longer······though stealthily, I started writing poems after poems." In a few of his letters also, Lakshmikānta admits of his indebtedness to Gopabandhū. Physically disabled almost at the prime of his youth, Lakshmikanta could reconcile himself to what was only by keeping awake the pain and the sense of loss within by his love for poetry, by expressing his sadness through poetry. He laughed away his own state by making others laugh. Sublimation was thus the essential vein behind whatever he wrote. He wrote both poetry and prose.

Most of the saddest and the sweetest songs Lakshmikanta wrote were collected together in 'Jibana Sangita.' which brings to the reader's mind Rabindranath Tagore's Gitanjali. The two books are so similar in respect of their appeal, inner honesty and the sincerity of expression. The poems in Jibana Sangita are all of them offerings, without any complaining and with a sense of gratefulness which make them also some of the subtlest ever written in Oriya. Till about 1942, the year of the Quit India Movement, Lakshmikānta wrote also poems vibrating with a feeling of genuine love for one's country. The country here meant also its people with their aspira-

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tions for liberating it to rebuild it as a home of free human beings. Like Gopabandhu's, Lakshmikanta's patriotic songs and poems were also expressions of a total consecration to a Truth that was much more than a patch of land on the map of the world. Lakshmikānta was decidedly the first to introduce parodies into Oriya literature and without belittling his excellence in other areas, we can say that he was at his best when he wrote these parodies which, more than anything else, sought to speak of the anomalies and the foibles of the present under cover of past moulds of poetry. The device never hurt, but did make the intended suggestions and achieved its purpose. Lakshmikānta also wrote some short stories and essays and an incomplete novel, 'Kaṇamamū' which goes to submit in its own way how an ordinary person can play a significant role when awakened to the challenges of the freedom movement. The description of the village life, its warmth and its communitarian dimension have here reached a profoundness that is only rarely found in Oriya novels. In 1936, Lakshmikānta started the fortnightly 'Dagara' of which he was the editor and which wanted to bring, in the words of the magazine itself, more life, light and laughter into Orissa. Dagara has a distinctive place within the galaxy of Oriya literary magazines, in that it has been for some years a progressive, forward-looking journal, catering specially for the younger in mind, yet away from the so-called literary schols and movements that aften tend to use literature to grind their own axes.

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Lakshminārāyaṇa Sāhū (1890-1966) has written what in quantity will never fall behind that of many of his contemporaries and with a sincerity which will in no way be less than that of the others. The number of books to his credit, both prose and poetry, will always compare very well with that of the more celebrated of his time. But for one reason or the other, he is seldom mentioned in any discussion on Oriya literature. Most of his books are very unusually small in size and do not seem to impress from the outside. But as one takes a chance to pick up one of them, one meets in the author at once the simple diction and creativeness of a Fakiramohana, the frankness and the honesty of a Gapabandhū and also the angruish and the agony of a Lakshmikānta. Lakshminārāyaṇa never took literature as a special pursuit, apart from the rest of one's life's loyalties. He shunned the purely academic interest in literature which was soon becoming the fashion in his days and perhaps believed that creative writing and taking an interest in literature was everyone's right if he had certain sensibilities for it and was inclined to it for that matter. His autobiography, *Mo Bārabutā Kahiaṇi* meaning, 'the story of my vagrancies with life', will always count as one ofthe best books written in Oriya in this category. Lakshminarāyaṇa may be really the first in Orissa to do some creative writing in the English language. It was entirely on his own much before the vogue was taken up as a regular pursuit with a tribe of writers in India. His English poems are short but revealing. They are wholes as

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structures and as conveyers of sentiments. Two of such poems, captioned 'O poor Man' and 'The Natural Man' speak out an honesty of attitude and express a frankness that has seldom been attained in Orissa. The sentiments are straight, no attempt has been made to blur the truth by way of a beautifying jugglery and yet the sentiments expressed are so deep, and so true.

Godābārisa Mahāpātra (1898-1965) is said to be the last in the line of the minstrels of the Satyabādi school. He was as a boy a student of the school at Satyabādi and must have drunk deep from the unique environment and the human contacts then obtained there. Starting with the Satyabādi inspiration, he lived quite long to experience the intermediary decades to independence and even about twenty years after that. Thus there is variety in the process of his becomings as a poet and a writer and what all he came to be in the various phases of his life. He published his first book of poems when he had just crossed his teens. Radhānātha was then clearly his star and his prop. But as he opened himself more and more into the spirit of Satyabādi and came under its spell, there was a marked change in the nature and direction of his poetry. Some of his best patriotic poems have been written with this inspiration. Social reality becomes his main theme, and thus, as he becomes more and more down to earth in his sensibilities, the diction and the style change and the treatments become more mature. Of course one can always mark a dichotomy, almost upto his very last, between his

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loyalty to Orissa and to the whole of manknid. He should have had the genius of a Gopabandhū to make the two complementary to each other. Because of this dichotomy, many of Mahāpātra's poems, though at the peak of a poetic parlance and a choice of words perhaps tend to expend themselves in instantaneous sentimentalizātions than providing a steady inspiration. It is interesting to see that Mahāpātra also wrote a poem for Lenin in 1924 at the latter's death and the sentiments he expressed were in a socialistic and political vein, though he does not seem to have any political alignment in any time of his life.

After independence, Mahāpātra launched into a yet third phase of his creative life. About a decade before freedom came, in 1938, he was the editor of a weekly 'Niānkhūntā' which became his sole forum to give vent to his ideas and sentiments as they formed themselves with the change of years. The poems he wrote for this weekly were all satires of fire, bringing out the best in the poet in the realm of a structure but serving more the interests of propaganda than of literature. When you are unable to act and yet feel the fury which should have driven you to real action, there is at times a mighty temptation to expend all your wrath through the medium of the printed word. Yet, we are grateful to Mahāpātra for having given to Oriya poetry some of the best through what he wrote during this phase of his creative craftsmanship. The poems of this period have been compiled into two volumes now;

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they are, 'Bankā o Sidhā' and 'Kantā o Phula'. They are reflections on the many zigzags that the country had to then take because of an inadequate leadership in the post-independence years in India. The note is a disgruntled one, all through, expressed through the brilliance of structure and sentiments. They tell of the contrast that became so conspicuous between what all was dreamt in the years of struggle for independence in the way of a reconstruction and a renewal and what actually came to be the lot because of a leadership that failed these dreams. The body of poems gives one a picture of ruthlessness fighting ruthlessness, the former assuming that it has stronger claims to be ruthless because it is a poet who expresses it. But after everything has been said about the contents and the scope of their appeal, it has to be admitted that through these poems, Godābaris'a helped evolve a form and a metre in poetry that reached a new dimension. The form was simple, straight and spoke of a style that had no intention to conceal. That formed quite into a tradition, reminding one of Nazrul in Bengal and later of Rabi Singh in Orissa.

Godābaris'a Mahāpātra wrote also prose, novels and short stories. Some of his short stories are among the best in Oriya literature and bore a structure and a dimension in their appeal which needs a come back now to Oriya literature to counteract much of the staleness and indifference that has crept into the field under the guise of a pseudo-perfectionism in technique and narrating skill. Godābaris'a's first short story was

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published af far back as .1923 and in all, he has now three story-collections after him, most of the stories reaching a height that very few have been able to reach. These short stories are replete with the themes of betrayal, of exploitation of man by man, of the dishonesty and the indifference of a leadership towards the people who had so much depended upon it. The style of these stories is of a biting and a piercing nature and very capably brings out the intrinsically human failings involved Among his novels, we can name Raktapāta, Bidroha, Pre'mapathe' and Rājadrohi among others of which the first has been written after Marie Correli's Vendetta and the last is a historical novel. Bidroha symbolizes the revolt of woman in a man-dominated society. It comes forward with its opposition to child marriage then prevailing in society and upholds the right of a widow to remarry. The Pre'mapathe' has been written in an apostolary style, a new experiment in the field of Oriya fiction writing.

Journalism was very much in the list of loves of Godābarisa Mahāpātra. In his younger days he worked in various journals and news-papers, of course as a junior co-worker. But he as it were bade farewell to everything else in life to embark upon journalism again and started the Niānkhūnta in 1938. It was about when the first popular ministry was formed in Orissa when the British Government after the recommendation of an official mission had decided to grant some self-rule to the Indian people and

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thus the first elections had taken place. The ministry came out of office in 1939 with the starting of the Second World War, but Niānkhūntā in the meanwhile had attained a take-aff and came to stay. From 1939 to 1947 were the years of fermentation including the Quit India Movement, but Niānkhūntā somehow survived though standing out of the national struggle.

Then came freedom, and after that the great years when men of literature must have taken up the cause of the country, of the promises that were in the offing. Pen must have been the most mighty and given the real directions. Somehow that did not happen in the case of the Indian literatures, due to reasons we shall discuss later. There was also the same phemomena to be seen in Orissa. Godābariśa was a part of this phenomena and chose to live with his journalism of the Niāṇkhūntā type. He could never come along to the mainstream, stood out and jeered at the incapacities of other people. When caricaturing and jeering become your first love, you do have a good audience many of which are themselves party to the failures being jeered at and yet want to have a laugh to their heart when these failures are being spoken of in an interesting manner. Pharisees have often a special knack to enjoy pharisaism being laughed at while living with it all the time and there were many of this type and variety in the clientele of Mahāpātra's journalism. It was unfortunate in that it made Mahāpātra squeezed into only one area of his talents and thus his responses to the challenges of the after-freedom years were so

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inadequate and remained content at the mere mud-slinging level. When one wants to go deeper into the causes, one has to feel that Mahāpātra more often than not and especially during the last leg of his moorings as a writer remained somewhat torn in his inmost loyalties between the inspirations he had got from Gopabandhū on one side and the tips his contacts with Niḷakantha and Godābariśa Miśra had given him on the other. He was so much on the side of the former till Gopabandhū lived, but after that, gradually slipped over to the other side. This makes Mahāpātra a very interesting case in Oriya literature, a person who could achieve so much, who had so much real worth, and yet who was so unpredictable even for the inner person in himself.

This brings us round about to the year 1925. In Oriya literature, it was the period of the Sabūja group, of the greens. But before we come to discuss it, we shall stop for a moment for Kūntaḷā Kūmari Sābat, an interesting variation in the main theme. Kūntaḷā Kūmari (1900-1938) was born a Christian, became a Brāhmo afterwards and then became a Hindu by marriage. She spent her formative years in Burma where her father was serving and after studying medicine, she also practised in Delhi. She died exactly when her writings could inspire the best out of her. She has books of poetry; 'Archanā' which wanders between human and divine love, 'Ūchchhwāsa', her book of odes, 'Sphūlinga' and 'Ahwāna' which include the patriotic songs written by her. The last was directly inspired by the

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non-co-operation movement started by Mahatma Gandhi and was banned by the British government for the views expressed in it. Her last book of poems was the Pre'machintāmaṇi.' Kūntaḷākūmāri wrote also in Hindi and very much suggests Mahāde'vi Vermā of the Chhāyavādi school of Hindi literature Among her short novels one can mention Raghū Arakshita, Bhrānti and Paraśamaṇi among others.

THE SABŪJA GROUP

The Sabuja were an intentional group of writers who started writing with a plan and with mainly a blasting enthusiasm as their capital. The group got its inspiration from the movement in Bengali literature brought in by Pramatha Chaūdhury's 'Sabuja Patra' and borrowed very much from its stylistic themes. They were mainly three, though the official number has come down to be five: Annadā Shankar Roy (b.1904), Kaḷindi Charaṇa Pānigrāhi (b.1901) and Baikūntha Nātha Pāttanāyaka (1904-1979). Their very first book was a poetry collection, 'Sabūja Kabita' which the whole group had combined to contribute, and a novel, which nine authors wrote, each being allocated to write a few fragments of it. Annadashankar, as long as he was in Orissa and wrote in Oriya, has produced only a sheaf of fourteen poems and a few essays in reminiscence. According to him, the Sabūja group had humanism as its principal inspiration and and article of faith. He has not written anything in Oriya after 1931 after he had got proofs of his success

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at his very first dent in Bengali literature And after him most probably the group in Orissa also got split to mean individual writers only. Kalindi is more known in Oriya literature as a writer in prose, and though he did venture into some poetry in his early years, the mature poet in him came out only at a later period, about a decade after the Sabūja Movement had its day. That he undertook his mission of writing with a larger perspective is indicated by the fact that he was also for some time an associate editor of Hans, the reputed progressive journal in Hindi then being edited by Premchand. Among the best novels Kālindi has produced is the triology on man, the Mātira Maṇiṣa, Lūhāra Maṇiṣa and Ājira Maṇiṣa, the human saga along the three subsequent social structures, with the village, the factory and the modern alienation as the determining environments. His other novels of the earlier phase are Mūktāgadara Kshūdhā and Amarachitā. Quite within the Sabūja spell, he also produced a book of stories and also a few dramas. After the spell was over, Kālindi seems to have come to the *alter ego* within him as it were and written poems and stories which are anything but the stuff he had been earlier producing. The short stories, compiled now in about three books include some of the best in Oriya and go very deep into the very pulsations of life. His poems at this latter period are on surer grounds, have a more concrete horizon and know more exactly what they mean to say. Gradually as Kalindi drew into his mature years, he also wrote a few essays, And at one time, somewhere during the transition between the two phases, he also tried his

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hand at writing text books for children and was quite successful at it. The last he produced which was worth him was an autobiography.

Baikūnthanathā wrote exclusively poems. In his childhood he was a resident pupil in Gopabandhū's school at Satyabadi and seems not to have liked to be there. He published his first poems in Jūgabiṇa, the journal of the Sabujas when the group was at its brightest. The collections of his poems are three Ūttarāyaṇa, Kāvya Sanchayana and Mrūttikā Darśana. The first two contain poems written in line with the Sabūja themes of enchantment, escape and humanistic rebellion, and the last includes poems written in bereavement.

With the Sabūjas and with the new zeal with which they had introduced themselves to literature the writers became instrumental in opening more windows and welcoming new winds in the field of creative writing in Orissa. The Subujas were all young men when they started. They were all of them in the towns and took the town to be the symbol of the things that were coming. They were the first instances after Gopabandhū, for whom Orissa was a part of the greater whole that was India. For them literature was more than a pastime and was a precious part of a creative person's commitment to life. They did have a design about society before them and society for them came to mean essentially people and the concept people included radically all men. The new humanism which inspired them also emphasized on human dignity,

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the dignity of man as an individual. Thus in the words of Annadā Shankara, in the scheme of the Sabūjas, freedom of thought was the very first necessity, economic freedom was the second, and political freedom was the third necessity. They did not want to throw away the past, but shunned an apotheosis of it. An eternal truth, they said, was not so because it belonged to the past but because of the eternal element it happened to carry within it. And thus what was perennial and permanent was not the property of any particular country, it was universal. These were the faiths which were never pronounced so loudly before.

Thus a deep awareness about the dignity of the individual and a keen sense of commitment to society were the two principal themes with the Sabūjas. It is quite understandable that it was anything but easy to live with the two ideals at the same time, especially when you have only a liberal enthusiasm as your sustaining capital. There was so much of the old society in the frame of reference upon which the Sabūjas made themselves heard and they were themselves a part of it. To dream of a new mutuality which had also room enough for individual freedom and dignity, to live a life that sincerely made for a change towards an attainment of this state was in no way an easy thing. An over-emphasized zeal for individual freedom therefore has always a danger to slip into a haven of romanticism, to escape under that pretext and to suffer a conflict and a contradiction within that is often so excruciating. The poems of the Sabūjas have so much

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of that conflict and contradiction in them, blowing escape and commitment almost in the same breath. Now they want so much to demolish all that stands for the old with a ruthlessness that sounds so genuine, and in the next moment, they want so much to run away, to have all the mirth and joys of life alone without any concern for the damn others. Kālindi seems to have said the last word to express this mood when he says that if the world fails to understand him, he will just close his eyes, immigrate within and will have the whole wealth of his own desired for-universe erected there. That is indeed solipsistic.

Quoting from a line of Annadāsankara, it appears that the writers of the Sabūja intimate group had the goal to defy contemporary society and would not heed to the idols of the market-place, they would build a heaven on earth and infuse life into the very dead. This was of course tall poetry. The pledges they had so solemnly taken fizzled out prematurely and remained confined only to the brave lines of their poems. It did not take very long for the greens to turn senile and yellow, to cope nicely with the existing structures and to succeed there as anyone else. The greens thus acknowledged a defeat within though they flourished as poets and what not in the old world of things they once so fondly wanted to break away from.

There were a few writers almost in a parallel corridor with the Sabūjas who scoffed at the latter in that they dabbled in too much imitation and had

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therefore lost their real moorings. The two most noted among them are Māyādhara Mānasingha (1905-1973) and Rādhāmohana Gadanāyaka (b. 1911). Mānasingha all through presumed that he was cutting a new path and providing a saner alternative. He seems to have retaliated by becoming more romantic and more of an escapist himself. His oft-mentioned poem about boating in moonlight in the Mahānadi is escapism out and out and though the poet has very much tried to imitate Keats's ode on the nightingale for a style and an appeal, what he offers is basically nostalgia, obstinate and yet not honest. Mānasingha has thus through out his entire career as a writer remained almost ludicrously torn between the old and the new, between the romantic and the modern. The volume of his writing is enormous, undoubtedly suggesting that the real love of his life was to write and to express himself. His poetical works can be studied phase by phase thus clearly marking the various stages of his commitment to his writings. The range is formidably vast, from his direct love poems full of the fervour that comes out of the languor for the beauty in flesh to musings on Gandhi and the Cross on which Jesus had died. The romantic runs all through as the common coagulant. The most beautiful and lovable thing about poet Mānasingha is a heart that revels at everything grand and great and is moved at the very first instant of such an encounter.

After freedom, Mānsingha tried to be somewhat more realistically exposed and made conscious attempts

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to give modern themes to his poetry. He also wrote a novel and several essays, including an autobiographical sketch of his experiences as a teacher. The prose he wrote is equally romantic, full of sentimental rigidities which have also an impact upon his use of words. In the later part of his life he seems to have inwardly converted himself to Buddhism and proclaiming that the Buddhist way was the only way. His translations and commentaries on the Buddhist Dhammapada and the Hindu Gita are the relevant examples. The last that he wrote, a biography of the great Fakiramohana, is in many respects the best of Mānasingha's works. His books on the history of Oriya literature, in English and in Oriya, created quite a stir when they were brought out. He has also a couple of other English books to his credit.

Rādhāmohana Gadanāyaka is out and out a poet. He was born in a remote village in the heart of Orissa and was thus saved from much of the urban lash that often wanted to corrupt that pure sensitiveness to create in the shape of schools, trends, and movements. He started writing poetry soley for the love of it. His translations of 'Me'ghadūtam' and 'Shorab and Rustam' are very neat achievements. His well-known books of poems include. 'Kābya Nāyikā' 'Ūtkalikā', 'Sāmūkāra Swapna', 'Pasupakshira Kābya' and Surya O Andhakāra.' Gadanayaka has a distinct place of his own in Oriya poetry as a writer of ballads and as a great adept in rhymes. His poems have always that irresistible note of musicality which is the poet's greatest score to win over the heart of his readers

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The Nabajuga Sāhitya Samsad was in direct reaction to the overplayed romanticism and dilettantism of the Sabūja group and the crusaders against them. It was about the time when the Communist movement was gathering momentum in India and as a development from this, the progressive writers' movement was also making itself felt in the field of Indian literature. The progressives had their first meet at Lucknow in 1936 and they issued a manifesto of their own in a subsequent session at Calcutta in 1938. This new wind had its counterpart in Orissa in the Nabajuga Samsad, formed in 1935 and it also started a journal of its own, the 'Ādhunika' in 1936. Bhagabati Charana Pānigrāhi, the younger brother of Kalindi Charana was the main figure behind the movement. Rāmaprasāda Singha was anther who has quite a few successful novels to his credit. All these writers believed in regeneration of man through a social revolution based on class struggle. They were in favour of creating a literature that was free, on the side of man and had absolutely nothing to do with archetypes like god and religion. What was more, this literature was to follow the footsteps of what was then happening in Russian literature. Of course, those were the days of the Kirov episode in Stalin's Russia.

The Ādhunika could not keep being published even for a full year. Bhagabati Charana wrote only scanty little, a few stories and a few editorials in which he spelled out the fixed lines. While one

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of his stories suggests that murder of the exploiter was a way to avenge oneself against exploitation, the second was an attempt at a sort of psychoanalytic portrayal through the theme of a story. These two stories have remained as typal landmarks not because they are literary masterpieces but because they show particular trends and slso world-views. Bhagabati and his colleagues were first in politics and only then in literature. As the years went by, they were more and more in active politics and thus had less time and love left for literature. Bhagabati died in 1943 and thus this new movement in literature came to a stop. But it helped as a powerful prop in the flowering of several other poets and writers who did take up the cudgel, though not in the strict party line. We shall come to them later. But one very significant effect of this whole movement and its appeal was the turn that it brought in the poems of Kālindi Charana and Baikunthanatha in their phases. It made both of them more sure and definite on their ground And in the years that were coming immediately, it did have its influence on poets like Sachi Routroy, Ananta Pattanāyaka, Raghunātha Dāsa and also a few others. Some took it up as a mission and some others as a fashion. We shall come to them before long.

Besides the writers and authors who represented the main strands in Oriya literature, there were many others who also wrote and contributed significantly to the enrichment of it. During the thirties there were

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many novels written by so many and they have of course to be reckoned with. It is interesting to observe that between Fakiramohana's Chha' Māāṇa Athagūntha and Kāḷindi Charaṇa Pānigrāhi's Mātria Manisa, there were only two novels worth any real mark, Ūpendra Kishore Dāsa's Malājanha (1928) and Baiṣnaba Charana Dāsa's Mane' Mane' (1926). The latter was a sort of prob novel and wanted to bring out what all lies below the conscious level of a person's actions and reactions and how actually what happened at the subconscious layers seemed so much to determine how he behaved outwardly. It was indeed a pioneer attempt and though it did not profess officially to be a psychological novel, it did have the traits of such a one. Upendra Kishore, the son of Gopala Ballabha who had written Bhimā Bhūyān where we had some inklings into Ādibāsi life in Orissa, introduces Orissa's villages into Oriya novel in Malājanha. The novel, it seems, had more an intention to describe the web of life in a village with its beauties and simplicities than to depict a story, which runs through the novel as an associate theme. But with the thirties of this century there appeared so many to write novels and we may thank the Sabujas to have provided a conducive spur for it.

To recount a few names in the realm of the novel we have Ananta Prasāda Panda (b 1906), Kamaļakanta Daša (b. 19(6), Chakrādhara Mahopatra (907), Pranakrūsna Samal (1912-1959), Lakshmidhara Nāyaka (b. 1914). Rajakishore Pattanayaka (b. 1912),Rajakishore Roy (b. 1914), Jnānindra Barma (b. 1918) and

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Lakshminārāyaṇa Mohanty (b. 1919). All of them wrote stories through their novels, with individual variations of course. Kamaḷā Kānta was warm, lucid and romantic, Lakshmidhara introduced almost a poetic flowery style in the novels, Rājakrshore Pattanayak was introspective, and therefore sometimes very lingering and dry. Lakshminarāyana has the credit of bringing out so much of the very noted novels and stories of the world in Oriya translation. That was a very valuable service in that it was a time when Oriya fiction writing wanted good models.

In the history of Oriya drama, Rāmashankara Roy was the first pioneer to cause a departure from the old Sanskrit tradition and introduce what could then be called a modern stage in Orissa. After him we have Aswini Kumar Ghosh (1892-1962) and Kartika Kumar Ghosh who introduced the prose dialogue style into Oriya drama, very much after Dwijendralal of Bengal. Lālā Nagendrekumār also added to the number of dramas. But the real fillip was given to stage in Orissa by Kāḷicharaṇa Pattanāyak (1898-1980) who lived long enough to remain the main inspiration behind what all was happening on the stage. Kaḷicharana was also a musician, knew the special tenets of Odissi music and what was more, he was able to give the needed modern elaboration to that so that it could be appreciated by modern ears. He has made some systematic research in the fields of Odissi songs and Odissi dance and has the credit of making the latter recognized in India as a form of classical dance. Kāḷicharaṇa started with the

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old themes as a subject for his dramas. The Kishora Chandrānanda Champū by Kabisurya put to a drama form by him can be cited as an example. Along the more than one and half score of dramas he wrote and also got staged, he also evolved as a dramawright and gave Oriya stage some of its first modern dramas. Bhāta (Food) was one such example and it had a deep social and dramatic appeal when it first appeared. Krushna-prasada Basu is a worthy contemporary of Kalicharana in this field

The drama tradition seems to have got a good take-off with the Sabūja group. Kalindicharana has written as many as three dramas. The Sabūja inspiration seems to have inspired the then outsider Mayadhara Manasingha also to try at a few. Harischandra Badala's 'Desara Dāka' and Rāmāranjana Mohanty's Gaudabijetā are two notable names in the list Through the forties, there were others, quite many of them, who were writing mainly for the stage. The real inspiration was of course Kalicharana behind all that endeavour, though there was a conscious attempt now to outdo him. The names of these writers for the stage are: Bhanjakishora Pattanayaka, Rama Chandra Mis'ra, Gopāla Chhotarāya, Manoranjana Dasa and Kamala Lochana Mohanty. How much permanent value these dramtas have as literary creations can be anybody's guess, Godabarisa Mis'ra's twin dramas on the kings of Orissa were perhaps not written exclusively for the stage. They were real attempts in the art of drama. So also the ones written by Badāl,

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Kalindicharana, Mayadhara and Ramaranjana. The dramas of this period have yet to be assessed as art forms as such. But we may only submit that these belong to a period of transition, the transition from the old jatra form to that of the modern drama. They were of course meant for the stage, yet there was already a beginning to look at them as representations of a form of art. The old jatras were also continuing, they have continued even up to very recent times, mainly as entertaining media and nobody will even think of making a serious assessment of these as serious art forms.

Essay and criticism as a form of prose writing had been hardly taken up seriously before the thirties. The first attempts at essays read like pieces in text-books and are written in a very artificial hard style, showing off more erudition than real artistic worth. Perhaps these beginners are a cause why there persisted till very long in Orissa an impression that essays and criticism were not creative art forms in a literature. The early essayists wrote like pundits and smacked of a didactic high-brow attitude as they wrote. Gopabandhu's prose style must have given the first blow to that tradition. Of course Pandit Nilakantha very much seems to have stuck to the old style, though he had flashes in between to give the readers the taste of a departure. Little wonder that some writers in critical prose do continue the vogue, and they assume it to be the only appropriate style in spheres of academics.

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The most important thing that happened in this field in Oriya literature during these decades was the formation of the Prãchi Samiti in 1927. The entire pioneering was by Prof. Ārtaballabha Mohãnty who took all the pains to collect the piles of palmleaf manuscripts scattered oll over Orissa, edited several of them and published them with learned introductions. These palmleaf manuscripts would have all been destroyed by the wear of time and in the process of modernization that took the attention of the people away from these to the now available books in print. Prof. Mohanty also edited an English journal, the Prãchi, to bring to light before a larger audience the wealth that was in Orissa's literature of old. As the manuscripts were printed and came out, it gave the study of Oriya literature the necessary links and the threads with the help of which it could be studied as a whole. No history of literature could be possible without having explored these links and the specimens that represented the links. Prior to it, one could look at the panorama by patches only, unconnected single creations which did not denote any continuity.

Pandita Binãyaka Mishra came out at this time with his two first books of history of Oriya language and Oriya literature. It was a very commendable attempt though, but also suffered from several limitations in that it was so much guided by the opinions of Sri Bijaya Chandra Majumdar who had brought out the Typical Selections from Oriya Literature appended with his own notings. After Ārtaballabha and

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Bināyaka, came a whole team of scholars who did serious work in the field of historical research on Orissa and helped so much in having further insights into Oriya literature. Ke'dāranātha Mahāpātra exclusively studied the late Marathā period of Orissa's history and wrote an exhaustive account of the rajahs of Khurdah. Satyanārāyana Rājagūrū was the first epigraphist. Prof. Kūnja Bihāri Tripāthi studied and interpreted the plates granted by the Orissa kings at various periods. Dr. Paramānanda Āchārya and Dr. Krūshna Chandra Panigrāhi were the pioneer historians. The latter's detailed study about the archaeological remains at Bhubaneswar brought to light many a clue to understand Orissa's religions and architecture. Mention should also be made of Sibaprasāda Dāsa who wrote the history of Sambalpur, thus revealing the course of history in the western part of Orissa. Dr. Rādhā Charaṇa Pandā made studies about king Kharabe'ḷa and the historical remains of the Prachi valley in the Puri district. The last in the list is Dr. Hare'krūshna Mahatāb, who has given us two works on the history of Orissa, one in Oriya and the other in English. These were of course the events of the forties.

Ancient literature did not have anything worthwhile for the children as a distinct group. There was of course a few things in the oral tradition that catered to the needs of the adult parents and the like to deal with their children. The poetry that could be sung in the familiar metres was meant for

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both young and old. The young, though they did not understand the inherent meanings, were used to sing them and enjoy the singing. It was also assumed that these songs most of which were written for the gods or on them must be beneficial to children also. Thus, children's literature as such, literature that catered for the special age and the world of experience that the children belong to was a very late arrival. In Oriya literature, the very first stuff for children were what was provided for them in the text-books. They were impositions and therefore were not real children's literature. The need for such a thing and a theme was felt in Orissa most probably with the Sabūjas and after that we get at least three persons in Orissa who wrote specially for children, and what was more, they wrote little else than for children. Any literature, including. Oriya literature, has the real claims to have come of age when it has a definite room for children's literature. The three names are Upe'ndra Tripāthi (b. 1903), Udayanātha Sadangi and Rāmakrūsna Nanda. Ūpendra wrote poems which make children relive their many experiences as they recite them. Udayanātha wrote mostly stories, often in a moralizing note, thus appealing best to children who are precocious. Rāmakūrsan wrote both prose and poetry and was the Pioneer who initiated the children of Orissa to the world of science. The journal he edited, the Samsāra, was specially devoted to exposing the children to science, to their own experiences and the bearing the latter had for children in exploring the truths of life. . A

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precursor to the Samsāra was of course the 'Janhamāmū', edited by Bālakrūsna Kara, which did inspire many well-known writers then also to write for children.

Gopabandhū had introduced Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian National Movement to Orissa. He had also introduced them to Oriya literature. After him, we have only Āchārya Haribara Dāsa from among his associates who had kept up the queue after him. But he was more in the Gandhian movement than in Oriya literature. Lakshmikanta and Kūntaḷā Kumāri seem to be the only names who took up the themes into their writings. The main heroes of the various literary movements were not quite aware of what was happening in India in the soon evolving political scene. They looked at the phenomena as if from a distance. The Communists for reasons of their own were more shirkers than sharers in the fight for national freedom. And those activists who were involved in the fray were perhaps not sufficiently aware that literature and the fight for the attainment of political freedom had something to do with each other. Some of them had no time for both, and a few of them perhaps also thought that literature was meant for the escapist only and a fighter, the *karmayogin*, had no need of it. Yet, we have two great names in Oriya literature who chose to be in both in literature and in the freedom fight. They were Birakishore Dāsa (1898-1973) and Bānchhānidhi Mohanty (1897-1938). Their songs, songs of patriotism and songs of fight did much to inspire courage into those who were on the fronts. Birakishore courted

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imprisonment for several times and his books of songs were proscribed by the British authorities during the Salt Satyagraha movement. Birakishore was also the editor of Mo De'ṣ'a, a monthly exclusively meant for children. Mo De'ṣ'a was instrumental in creating many writers for children in Orissa by way of having provided them with a forum.

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CHAPTER IX

THE DEAD AND THE LIVING

The literary scene in Orissa as independence came acquaints us with the following poets and writers who were very much known as the prominent ones, In poetry it was the day for Sachi Routroy (b. 1913) who has also many worthy examples to his credit in prose writing. His poems of those youthful years have been compiled into collections like Pātheya, Pallishree, Abhijāna, Bāji Rout and Pāndūlipi. These poems were written in a style and a tone that seemed to be Routroy's very own and more than anything else indicated the great love that Routroy had for life that might be. He sang of freedom, of justice and of a society where every man could live with dignity and hope Bāji Rout made Routrov especially endeared to readers in Orissa and outside in India. It was about the young hero who had given his life in a police firing in a feudatory state, that was a part of the oppression intended against the people who were now ready to throw away the shackles of slavery. His novel Chitragriba and the story collections, Mātira Taj and masāṇira phūla were written with the same inspiration and were companions to the compilations of poetry quoted above. This was the phase of Sachi Routroy, the revolutionary. The other Routroy that was yet to be hatched out later under another sky was

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nowhere to be sensed in these early creations of his The others who will be remembered from this decade as poets of vigour and hope should be Ananta Pattanāyaka (b. 1913), Manamohan Miśra (b 1924) and Raghūnātha Dāsa (b. 1919). The notable others, at lest two of them, who were professedly outside this revolutionary zeal are Krūshna Chandra Ttipāthi (b. 1911) and Kunja-behāri Dāsh (b. 1914). Krūshnachandra has written lyrics, odes and sonnets, poems of patriotism and also poems of beatitude, but with a natural candour and ease that is not very much visible with the poets who have to make an effort to write a poem. Tripāthi is a humanist, a lover of man and nature and believes in the good in man. He sings of a new society where life ful-fils itself by seeking for more life.

Kunjabehari has also dealt with nature and patriotism in his poems. In addition to the earlier poems that seem to come from his heart, he has also let himself later at times to make use of the brains to make poetry. Besides essays, biographies of men of literature travelogues and an autobiography, he has put his hands at writing a couple of novels also. But his real and the most commendable contribution to Oriya literature is the collection of myriads of folk songs and folk tales of Orissa This has indeed been his real love and thus in the fitness of things, the folkloric appears to have so much influenced the entire bulk of his writings, both prose and poetry, even his total attitude towards litera-ture and life itself.

In fiction, we have during these years the two brothers Kahnū Charana Mohanty (b. 1906) and

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Gopinātha Mohanty (b. 1914) who have in the long run come to mean so much in the history of Oriya fiction. Kanhā Chārana has more quantity than his brother who has his own way of a creeper-style prose which seems to take you straight to the very element of poetry that is inherent in life itself Gopinātha has brought the Ādibāsis to the Oriya novel, but often leaves his treatment of them at a romantic level, in spite of his desire to describe them as realistically as possible. He suggests, almost by omission, that there should be more and more prose writers in Oriya who will deal with the Adibāsi culture not only as an interesting culture to be inspired about, but as a total structure throwing out real challenges that have to be met with and responded to. The most appropriate will be when the Ādibāsi himself begins to speak of himself and claims that he does no more have a desire to be eulogized as a museum piece.

This brings us to Nityānanda Mahāpatra (b. 1912), the son of Kāntakabi Lakshmi Kanta. He was as patriotic as his father to start with, as some of his poems ably show, and his concept of patriotism did have man at the very fore front. His short stories suggest vigour and affirmation. But his best are his novels, which present a deep analysis of the promises and the propensities that lie within man as man. The time in which Nityānanda came to live as a full man was in India one where literature and politics were to go very much close together. Genuinely interested in literature, one had to be also in politics which deals with the destiny of man in this world. And in view of the state of the mass of men at that time in India there was so

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much to be done in politics to see man rehabilitated in society with the dignity due to him. Thus, there are instances where a person wanted to be both in politics and literature and serve man in both capacities But when Nityānanda entered an area where politics meant primarily power and not man, it got the better of him in spite all the good-will of which he had so much in him. Nityânanda, it seems, must have understood more than anybody else that his real *dharma* was not politics but literature. He entered political power with the righteousness of an overconfident man and sunk with it. He turned a melancholist after that and could not write with the same old vein again.

Dr. Harekrūshna Mahatāb has been always more in politics than in literature. Literature was his second love since the very beginning and in all probability he expected the same return from it as he did from politics: power. He had earlier written a patriotic small kāvya and a few poems, just as a noble hobby. While in jail he wrote his History of Orissa which brought him the best laurels as a writer. Mahatāb has six novels to his credit which deal with the social ferment and the political confusions of the times in which each of them was written. These fictions do have a value as giving us information about what all was going on in the style of an essay. Mahatāb has been instrumental in bringing out a monthly and a daily in Orissa and through them bringing together old and young writers under his inspiration and providing a dlatform for literary interchange of ideas. The daily

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has a weekly for writings by and for children also. In all these respects Mahatāb has been an able organizer and his experience from political life must have helped him a lot in this regard. The most senior person in Orissa now in the realms of both politics and literature, he perhaps has gradually conditioned himself to dwell at a level from which he can deal with both literature and politics with an expedient ease.

Political freedom for India meant so many things to so many people. The political leadership that took over from the British was not prepared to lead the second phase of change in the country, the social revolution. Power corrupted gradually and soon degenerated into absolute power to corrupt absolutely. The rebels became soon the reactionaries. The heroes of yesterday wanted to rule over our to-day's like satraps of the medieval oriental type. All the measures at modernization were feudalistically oriented in their marrows and its exponents did not mean what they said and celebrated. The real problems of India, poverty, ignorance, inequality and human humiliation were connived at and their solutions were postponed. All that incapacity made the leadership cowardly and soft. That was a misfortune. When India became free, all the other countries of the third world that were being born into the light had expected India to show the way, but India's leadership utterly failed their expectations. It fancied that it could bring in opulence by imitating the affluent societies of the west and ignored the people at home and the roots that sustained them. The entire

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climate at the e'lite level, became schizophrenic, ready to grab at everything but unable to exert itself, to be worthy of and adequate to the challenges and above all to take up the responsibility really. The result was dismal. The clever rich became richer and took the crudest short cuts to become yet more rich in the quickest possible time. The poor became poorer. The oppressors became worse oppressors with a shrewdness only possible in a disorganized society. There was an end to the old community, artificiality grew and crept into all the spheres of our social living. Honesty was the worst victim and people gradually thought it out-of-date to depend upon courage and live by genuine convictions. Let it be very clearly stated that this was no outcome of the Western civilization. it was the cream of India's incapacity to learn from the real spirit of the West and in a sort of opportunistic charlatanism to imbibe those things from the modern impact as would feed the old barbarian in a class-ridden society and embolden him to continue the old under a new guise. No change was brought about in at least two areas which would have meant radical changes in the structures and relationships. These were the fields of land reform and education. Education aimed at mediocrity and helped all who came to have it to run about in a heightened sort of grandiloquence and to lose their backbones in the process.

Literature could have given a leadership and provided an alternative. It could have challenged power, challenged chicanery and the smallnesses. It

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could if it could have the proper awareness and also the courage. But actually, in a backward society like India's, literature was a business and to a great extent the pastime of the e'lite who bossed it over the rest in society. Even the so-called radicals and the progressive who spoke and sang as if they would blow up the whole old structure when they possessed the powder needed for that had so much of the old in them and so much wished to live with it. The progressive movement in Indian literature had ironically its first inception in London where a few young enthusiasts from India studying there dreamt some ambitious dreams and loved to do it. They came to India with a huge ballast of that enthusiasm. But as they gradually got into *Realpolitik,* they soon knew what was what and the enthusiasm withered away. Progressive literature was soon swallowed up by what was called to be left politics and those writers who did not have predominantly a knack for politics, though they did remain in literature, took up a surrogat and strived to look modern and radical with a different guise. Thus the so-called modern movement in literature soon came to mean the movement for new styles and techniques, not unoften harping, in a bizarre sort of way, on new lethargies and therefore also on new eccentricities.

The tradition seemed to continue broadly into the years even after freedom. Some writers opted as it were to be on the side of power and greatly helped the beginning of a decadence. The general decadence that set in in the country was because of some real failures and

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inadequacies. The genuinely committed writer is never on the side of the Establishment. His voice is always a powerful protest against arbitrary power. He is always on the side of man, of the future and of truth in spite of the pretensions that seem to rule all around. The committed writer is always there to question power. Power to him is a negation of life and all that it stands for A writer is always on the side of affirmation, on the side of love The courage of the writer as a writer has been the worst victim as far as writing in post-independence Orissa is concerned And when you have forfeited that courage and yet can exhibit the best kind of skill and glare in your craft as a writer, you are serving only decadence, and strengthening it at your own peril

THE BEGINNING OF A DECADNCE

When there was this fundamental incapacity to face the real issues and the real privations, the writers ran away and took refuge in gimmicks aud skills. One can say without an exaggeration that in Oriya poetry at least there was a regression to the *reeti* phase of its history in the 17th-18th centuries where the poets of the court overdid the structure of poetry to conceal the fact as it were that they had nothing more important to say. Thus, as far a range is concerned, the poets remained very closed and cornered in spite of the avowed modernity in their styles. This process of falling from grace can be marked quite clearly even in the case of some individual writers, who so much

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testify to the overall decadence that set in with their tacit co-operation. Because of his earlier poetic sensibility and the sincerity of his commitments, Sachi Routroy had been hailed as the poet of the people and his 'Baji Rout' had been translated into English and received high appreciation outside Orissa His collection 'Pāndūlipi' may be taken as a dividing line between the green and the red in him on one side and the grey that was soon coming over him. 'Hasanta' which came after that speaks of a disillusionment and a great betrayal that the poet sensed was all around him. This shook something at the very roots and during the next three decades, Routroy's poems, in any case most of them, suggest how he has escaped and taken shelter in something else. The drifting has gradually made itself felt, developed through eddies and bays of an infatuation with style and externalities and has reduced itself almost into ridiculous dimensions. One has an impressson, and it is really a very depressing one, once you have fallen in love with the earlier Routroy, to see him faring as if he was now bent upon unmaking the real image of the poet he once had been. Poetry almost became a wailing now, in a morbidly introverted style of minute sophistications of an embroidery. Routroy even went as far to justify the heroic story of the fall by discussing in whole books how values and emphases have undergone a change in the more advanced countries and almost seemed to suggest that we ought also to follow suit in order to look up-to-date in the literary bazar. It is an irony and perhaps a mockery of the poet's earlier creations that he got

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the official awards for what he produced during his later phase, which now looms large and sits heavy upon the corpse of what he had professed himself to be capable earlier. It is consoling that in between you come across exceptional flashes when Routroy seems to have gone back as it were and sought to rediscover the real gem he once was. Routory who once sang about humanity and about the revolution that would reinstate man on the saddle now takes somewhat a keen interest in collecting old manuscripts and old statues suggesting the past that was. This also substantiates his own story.

The poets of the people have gone the way the people's leaders also have gone; compromised with themselves, sold their dreamwares and declared their insolvency. The trend explains the way of many other poets who write and produce with almost a neurotic vigour and vehemence and yet betray a helplessness in spite of all the grandeur they seem to have fabricated around their woven pieces. To come tothe modern phase in Oriya poetry is to be confronted with an ocean of names. These names do represent certain trends, but these trends are yet to make themselves distinctly felt and prove if they have any permanent claim Thus, individual poets, at least some of them are the only vectors through which we can sense into the simmerings of this phase almost decade by decade. In immediate succession to Sachi Routroy, Ananta Pattanāyaka and Manmohana Mishra, we have Binode Nayaka (b. 19 9) who has a world of his own, an estranged topography, bringing into Oriya poetry all the unfamiliar place-names from all

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over the globe. That gives galmour and creates a feel of romance and spread, but the contents suggest that the poet is as it were exiled in himself, within his own fortification of words and images and takes pleasure in poetry for seemingly poetry's sake, for his own sake. Then we come to Gūrūprasāda Mohanty (b. 1924) whose poem Kāḷapūrūṣa came almost as a comet on the horizon and proclaimed that a new age had really come in poetry andmust be acknowledged as the only regime. Gūrūprasāda created a wonderful wasteland in the Eliotian style in the Oriya language and provided it with almost a computerized brilliance. He has to his credit about thirty poems, most of them collected in the compilation 'Samūdrasnāna.' It is interesting to see that the comet went away as abruptly as it had come and Gūrūprasāda came as it were to discover, honest to himself, that he had nothing more to write. Bhānūji Rao (b 1926) was Gūrūprasāda's counterpart in the 'two in one', trailing alomost the same path though there is a certain intimacy that permeates all through in his poetry. Bhānūji also has stopped short and decided to withdraw.

SOME OTHER TRENDS IN POETRY

There have been of course other trends. There have been also a few poets who wrote because they loved poetry as such and also had a soft corner for man more in the abstract than otherwise. The tribe of these poets has been described euphemistically as the humanists. We may name Benūdhar Rout (b 1925) as belonging to this category. He does not show any interest to search intentionally for images and

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archetypes in order to make a poem; on the other hand he brings himself under a poetic spell as it were, looks around and the needed associations do come to him with a certain mark of individuality that is disinguishable. Rout's long poem 'Pingaḷāra Śūrya' is a landmark in modern Oriya poetry. He should have given more of his love to poetry. Chintāmaṇi Behera b. 1929) has a deeper feel into life with its characteristic many-splendouredness and thus the use of the ornaments is less intentional with him. He has an eye that can see with an empathic warmth and without making any noise about the structure of a poem. he can make seemingly insignificant things significant to us. Dūrgācharaṇa Paridā (b. 1929) has a corner of his own in the diffused hall of modern Oriya poetery and perhaps in all intents and purposes does not want to come to the more vocal at the centres His special style is brevity in expression, a philosophic feeling of intensity and a strange intimacy of feeling. The poems, short though they are, have long refrains which tell you that in spite of what was expressed through the frugality of words, much more has remained unexpressed. They so much ssuggest a certain type of style much prevalnet in Urdu poetry which suggests much more than it really unveils. In the same breath, we have Jibanānanda Pāṇi and Binode Routroy (b. 1930) also. A real green and smiling gem among the poets of this period, in no way falling in line with most of them yet incorporating so much of the best elements of any poetic tradition anywhere is Bidyūtprabhā Devi (1929-1977). She started writing already when

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she was very young and went through the various stages in the process of her realization, and the developments are clearly marked in her poems. One of her collections, the Swapnadipa is worth special mention. Most of the love poems in the world have been written by the stronger sex, the male, assumed so because of a structural norm that has been made so because males have always ruled here upon earth Bidyūtprabhā's Swapnadipa is a collection of love poems, quite of another vein in contrast with the traditional rut and does not have that masculine stink of the other love poems written according to the rules of a masculine grammar. Bidyūtprabhā's other poems express a deep love and concern for a future that will give us the new man and a new faith to live with. Tūḷasi Das (b 1932) also can be named along with Bidyūtprabhā. Though a house-wife in a remote coastal village, she has continued with her tryst with poems, very much unconcerned about what happens in the cities under the canopy where poets assemble as solicitors as it were and goes on thanking God that her faith in life and her sincerity to go deeper into life with the innocence which alone can reveal things have still not failed her.

Not so much unconcerned are of course the two major poets of modern Oriya, Ramākānta Ratha and Sitākānta Mahāpātra. They have always to labour under a limitation in that they are highly placed in the government services and hence greatly run the danger of being hailed as the very celebrated even before they themselves have a desire to be so proclaimed. In a

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country where your place in the hierarchy matters terribly much, it is perhaps a misfortune to be placed high in the rungs, especially when you want to remain in the field of literary creativeness and make your own furrows with some real faithfulness and labour. Ramākānta b. 1934) and Sitākānta (b. 1937) had their initiation into poetry-writing through an inspiration that they had got from English and American poetry with their associated trends and turning points. It is perhaps that inspiration which has made them what they are as makers of poetry. They have tried their best to express into Oriya poetry what all they have gathered from remote pastures and gardens, of course tempered with an individual slant that no one can totally dispense with, the slant which you carry with you because you belong to a certain soil and a certain collective soul. Ramākānta has written only poems, except of course the postfaces to some of his collections as a way of a compensation for not having written anything in prose. He has his own elaborate and at times even hackneyed way of saying things, winning over your feeling of monotony because of reading him with a whole gala of images and allusions, which appear to you as sprightly coloured falcons fluttering on an otherwise uninteresting leafless tall tree. Sitākānta seems to take greater care of the ground on which he wants to stand; appears, in the use of his ornaments, to be nearer to us. He takes the tips from our Purāṇas and our familiar hearsays and knows the magic to be able to use them as parts in his modern poetic syntax. As he himself says in a preface to one of his book of poems, the poet's roots

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ought to be in the soil itself though the range of his references and inspirations may be from various regions and climes. Sitākānta and Ramākānta have published many volumes of poems and quite a lot of these have been translated to English. That apeaks of the recognition that their poems have received in the English-loving world, and one is tempted to think that these two poets of ours should belong more appropriately to that world, however much they may by doing that remain remote and far-fetched to our readers. It was perhaps in the very fitness of 'things that these two poets have chosen to be more and more intellectual along the years and also have adopted preferably a diction that will be more easy to be translated.

Many other poets, younger in age, have followed Sitākānta and Ramākānta as sort of a *leitbild* and have had a perpetual relationship of both love and hate with them. They have more often than not tried to excel them by imitating them, of getting away from them by holding a constant dialogue with their ghosts. That is really a very strange situation but becomes true when imitation is the main frolic. Such names, which must make a long list, are Saūbhāgya Kumāra Mishra, Jagannātha Prasāda Dāsa, Kamaḷākānta Lenka, Deepak Mishra, Pratibhā Satapathi, Prafulla Tripāthi, Prasanna Mishra, Sourindra Bārik and many others. Each of them has his own variations, but they worship almost the same gods. Together, they present the picture of a huge yard where everyone is everyone's competitor and though belonging to the same clan, are out to outwit

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and outshine one another. Each seems to have an ambition to exist alone. They represent as it were a labyrinth of experiments aiming at making poetry become relevant to the life they seem to experience with the help of their respective lenses.

Most of our poets in Oriya who had started with social justice and equal dignity for every man as a man were Marxists. They talked of the party and of their poetry almost interchangeably and saw no incongruity in it. Time played its own havoc upon them and they were soon out of tracks doing some ornamental archery somewhere else. They had put on a different tunic when freedom came and never wanted to remember their past affiliations. But there was another group which kept the appeal alive and proved through the wealth of their poems that you need not be a partyman with a uniform in order to revolt against injustice, oppression and cant. The very first name that comes to mind in this regard is Rabi Singh (b. 1932) who has almost unitarily kept his voice on the side of man's struggle and revolt for a better world, heard through the many volumes of poetry he has by now published. He is followed in the tradition by Krūsna Charaṇa Behera b. 1931), Brajanātha Ratha (b. 1936), Prasanna Pātasani Sadâs'iba Dāsa and a few others. It is really a great thing, to still live with faith in the destiny of man when the court singers of the wasteland empire are so vehemently proclaiming that it is to foolish to have a faith, useless to consciously dream, to wait and to sing of that hope and of that waiting. Rabi Singh has tasted more of the crude and physical sufferings of life

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than many of his contemporary singers of the *Weltschmerz*, has to live solely from his writings in great contrast to the man y who have taken up writing as an added cosmetic extra to their otherwise comfortable lives horizontally lived. Thus he must have an obstinately soft heart, a conscience that will not bend and a faith that is able to persist in spite of all the insinuations to the contrary. The only difficulty with Rabi Singh is that he continues living with the same level of inspiration and protest and has not opened himself to any inner escalation. Even anger must have its elevations in order that it may not exhaust itself in the familiar fumings. Perhaps, Brajanātha Ratha is more conscious of it than Rabi Singh; Brajanatha's latest book, 'Sabhvatāra Mūhan' is an indication. Let these inherit the earth.

Banchānidhi Dāsh (b 1923) seems to be the only poet in Oriya who has kept up the tradition of Birakishore Dāsa and Banchhanidhi Mohanty. These were the singers during the years of stuggle for India's freedom. That freedom, political freedom at least, has been now achieved. The poet of nationalism has now only to lament that the country has not become the ideal one it had been once dreamt that it should become, and he thus seems to exhaust all his poetic acumen only on that. Another reaction to the fundamental disappointment after the achievement of political freedom has been a revivalistic trend with all sorts of sentimentalization with a modern temper. In Oriya poetry. this has expressed itself through the Anāma group. The group professes to see all fulfilment

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of Orissa's destiny personified as it were in the institution of Jagannātha and exercises all its head and heart to demonstrate that it has found out the real link and the real tips. Harihara Miśra and Kumāra Mohanty among others belong to this group of enthusiasts. Their most valuable service to Oriya poetry has been perhaps an attempt to rescue it from the heartless intellectuality of which it had been a victim. There has been a marked change at least in the use of words and similes. The Anāma poets have quite powerfully made it said that the poets in Orissa have yet to explore the appropriate archetypes so that poetry here can flourish upon the real substance-giving roots.

Before we close this section on the discussion of poetry during our times we shall definitely do well to speak of two others, Śrīnibāsa Ūdgātā (b 1935) and Tapana Pattanāyaka. These do not belong to any official school, neither do they sing in any prescribed style. They sing and versify solely because they are enchanted with all that has been presented to them as the life around them and because they cannot but sing and versify. In these days of the heroic thraldoms that so much tend to vitiate the very inspirational matrices of poetic endeavour, it is a pleasure to read Ūdgātā and Pattanāyaka and to feel elevated and identified with the world that has so much treasure in store for us. Ūdgātā has alredy brought out about half a dozen books of poems, each indicating a further step in his evolution as a poet,

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indicating an intimacy he has with himself and with the world around him. There are also other signs that a new phase in Oriya poetry is already so much in the offing. These new poets, as hesitant as the newly betrothed and more willing to give to poetry the best in themselves than having any desire to acquire an empire somewhere in the hierarchical pandemonium, are going to mark the next phase in Oriya poetry. They are several, scattered, not yet linked together, but do give an indication of a new attitude being born, an attitude that combines an inner honesty with a deep sense of commitment.

THE ORIYA NOVEL

Great novels, the mahākāvyas written in prose, have been very rare in Oriya literature in its modern phase. Modern life has been so split up into fragments and the chasms between them have been so confounding that it is almost a hero's job to discover the real centre that can hold the parts together and thus present a powerful whole. Fakiramohana's Chha' Māāṇa Āthagūntha could pass for a great novel mainly because it came as a pioneer and the aspirations that characterized the age were very clear and definite. Fakiramohana was also, on his side, an embodiment of the aspiration of a whole people and had the courage and the honesty to be that. In an age like ours, persons who are only fragments pass for wholes, they seek power more than they seek any real fulfilment, they do not really grow with their aspiration but wear masks that intend to make fools of the times and

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look big. Making a quick survey of Oriya novels that appeared on the eve of independence, Kānhucharana's 'Hā Anna' appeares to have made some real mark. He depicted, although with a great many foibles, the 1866 famine of Orissa that took a heavy toll of lives and Pauperized the life of the land in so many ways. It seems strange that even Fakiramohana did not choose that as one of his themes for a novel, At a time as his, he was perhaps more occupied with a future than with the past. Sâsti was the best that Kānhu Charana probably could produce, because the others which he wrote in a long sequel, picking up almost anything as a theme and striving hard to give it an up-to-date feel showed more of an engineering skill than of any real assimilation and insight. The style was stale and the music of the movements seemed to repeat the same old metres. The story gets an upper hand where the characters fill up as pâwns and it becomes more and more clear that the author has perhaps nothing very forceful to present. In fact Kânhu Charana has hardly said anything with force.

Gopinâtha also gave us his best when he wrote Paraja; the next best, Amrūtara Sintâna had comparatively less lustre. These two depicted the Ādivâsis in Orissa. His comparatively less bulky novels had flashes here and there, but the gossipping part was so preponderating that it gave the reader seldom any time to think for himself. The most the latter could do was to stand in awe before the stunt in the words. Gopinâtha reached the apex of his ambition to write

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large bulks in Mātimatāḷa, which also brought him the highest acclamations but which was a clear proof that the daemon was already on the wane and had now not very much more in its power than to say the most ordinary things in a big way. Digadihūdi which came after Mātimatāla established the fact that there was no power in the gun any more and that words were therefore the only crackers. In the line of the regional novels which were Gopinātha's special field, we may mention Jameswara Mishra's Khamāri and Gadatiā, depicting the village-dwelling toiler's life in the former and the many curves and contortions of middle-class living in the Sambalpur region in Western Orissa in the latter. Oriya novels in the main gradually became more dependent on stories as vehicles of entertainment as can also be evident in the later novels of Kanhū Charana and Gopinātha. The other obsession with technique soon followed. Gobinda Dāsa's novels, Amābāsyāra Chandra being the first of them came as it were with a dash as a piebald unfamiliar event riding on a stilt and amazed all who came across it, because everything that was in it was faithfully imported and because it introduced uncanny elements into the Oriya novel. Gobinda Dāsa (b. 1926) goes very well together with Krūṣnaprasāda Mishra (b. 1933) who has several novels and short stories to his credit and whose whole frame of reference is always the disneyland of the Americas with all its superlative heavenly frenzies. The style and the content of his treatments aim at taking the readers at home with a storm as it were and give them a feel of that sort of literary beautitude which seem to

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raise you up about a few yards above the ground. Gobinda Dāsa and Krūshna Prasāda are among the ambitious wayfarers in the yet very much undeveloped territory of Oriya novels.

Sūrendra Mohanty has always something definite to say through his novels and short stories. His Andhadiganta is the only political novel in Oriya written with a certain seriousness and hindsight. His Niḷasaiḷa is perhaps the only historical novel written with some success which probes into the heart of Orissa's history at one of its very distressed moments with an eye that is primarily an artist's. He has also two biographical novels, both bringing to light the achievements and the disappointments of the great Madhūsūdana Dāsa, very ibly written and presented in a spirit of sincere adoration. Basanta Kūmari Pattanāyak (b. 1927) wrote brilliant prose in the form of novels when she wrote. Her Amadābāta is a landmark of achievement in Oriya novel, though the sequel to it, perhaps written to fulfil an obligation as it were is really no follow-up to the former. Basanta Kūmāri came to the realization at a certain point in her career as a writer that literature was not enough. Literature is definitely not enough when pursued entirely as literature. But if the voyager within is ready and willing, literature can always serve as a vehicle of expression for his further seekings, even in the form of novels.

Sāntanū Kumāra Āchārya (b. 1934) is the surrealist among the present band of novel-writers. But the

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complex web of words and metaphors he weaves to give his reality an elegant form has always a romantic photofinish around it, thus often taking the appreciator-reader away from it than otherwise. Satābdira Nachike'tā, Narakinnara and Sakūntaḷā are some of Sāntanū's most known novels. As novels of isms, these have a very fastidiously laboured-out frame which looks more as a maze than a door through which you enter the real heart of the themes. The language very much betrays that the master himself is not very confident about his lions he wants to exhibit within the enclosure of his novels. Terribly in contrast to Sāntanū is Bibhūti Pattanāyaka, (b.1939) who writes with tremendous fecundity and has now about two scores of novels to his credit. The story looms large and is meant cleanly for those who want a novel by their side for entertainment. Pratibhā Roy follows him on the same track. She is more up-to-date in style of the narrative and is thus an improvement upon him. Both of them continue to write in gay profusion. Chandrase'khara Ratha's Jantrārūdha is a commendable departure from the contemporary ones. The style is a brooding one and aims at proving a point than telling a story. Gaṇe'swara Miśra (b,1942) has aptly narrated the life of the Noḷiās, the professional fishermen who live by the sea and whose profession chiefly determines their life-styles.

AND SHORT STORIES

Short stories may be called an appropriate medium substitute to the erstwhile novel. People do not have so much time, life is mostly lived as it were in

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snapshots and involvements with it has gradually become somewhat provisional in their ambits and loves. Thus the short story has come to have its day as a medium now. It tends to keep the reader within an air of proximity with life. It is not therefore an accident that most of the novel writers also take to short stories and thus have the satisfaction of fulfilling two roles though remaining one as it were. Of course there are also some of these who are more suecessful with short stories than with the novels. One can clearly mark in Oriya literature that short stories have of late gradually tended to read like essays with thin fringes of a story to give it the identity of a story. Modern poems and novels too seem so often to strive to become essays without saying it. And prose tries to come nearer to poetry as the latter feels more fulfilled when assuming the garb of prose. Thus things get nearer to one another though they seemingly get wore confused into one another. The modern short story can thus pass as a lyric in prose, a microcosm that aspires to hold a whole universe within it.

The first two names to be remembered as seniors in the field of Oriya short stories are Bāmācharaṇa Mitra (1915-1976) and Basanta Kūmāra Śatapathi (b 1915) To write was the very *dharma* of Bāmācharaṇa. He was very widely read and was always alive with ideas and the excellences one has when one has made the ideas assimilated as one's own. Bāmācharaṇ's stories always spilled into the belles-lettres style and were always replete with an appeal that was intrinsically

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humanistic. Bata Mahāpūrusa and Narachhanchāna are two of his collection of short stories. Bāmācharaṇa has also a book of critical essays in a sort of reminiscent style. Basanta Kumāra's short stories have also the belles-lettres effect. He seems to give in to an introspective style which always underlies his stories. His stories are an attempt at sincere probe into the tragicomedies of everyday life. Rajanikānta Dāsa (1918) who writes poems, novels and short-stories with equal zeal, is honestly very near to life around him and never allows his technique to get the better of the essence he wants to present. Kishoricharaṇa Dāsa (6.1924) writes like a hero about the antri-hero cowards of the middle class society in Orissa. In a capitalistic society like ours, the so-called middle-class is nearer the average lowers in the many actual situations of life but in its heart of hearts it has a falseness and a conceit that wants to belong more to the more-privileged higher-ups In his choice to speak only of this class through his short and long stories, Kishori Charana has to squander himself within the very narrow horizoṇs and the shallow reaches in the rich vastness that life should be. This is in spite of the originality and the brilliance in which he always tackles his themes. His is perhaps essentially a problem of self-transcendence and where there is an unwillingness to transcend, one remains flat as it were on a plateau, like a Prometheus bound and tamed. The writer withers away if he chooses to remain conformed to his eon.

Akhiḷa Mohana Pattanāyaka and Mahāpātra Niḷamaṇi Sāhū have the same year of birth (1927) though

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they have gone different ways in their career as story-writers. Akhiḷamohana (died in 1982) started with actual life as a leftist and a futurist. The glamour of the leftist for an immediate apocalypse has already taken leave of him, but that early optimism has left an element of warmth in him which has in course of his later encounters with life got itself slided down into the tragic sense of life of the Unamuno type Thus his stories have always tears and a laughter about them and thus the indecisiveness happily lingers. Akhiḷamohan has written scanty little in comparison with his more ambitious compatriots, he seems to have taken to writing as a side hobby only. But it also seems that he has nurtured in him all along a sense of detachment which sportively takes every pursuit of life as it were as a hobby and his writing as one of them seems to preside over all the others. Mahāpātra Niḷamaṇi Sāhū has written both novels and short stories, but the latter seems to be his first love. Humour and pathos go together in his stories and some critics have fallen into an illusion by saying that he has humour as the underlying element in whatever he has written. He has indeed written much and has a fascination for the flamboyant details in his description. In spite of all the neatness he observes about the details, he still remains at a distance from those he creates for his story. And what is more, Sāhū seems to think that he can solve all the problems of life through the analytical details of his stories. Hence most of his stories have a didactic fervour, smell as if somebody is speaking to you from a height. And all this he does

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with a certain mastery giving everything a garb of direct humour.

Manoj Dās (b. 1934) brought fame for him by means of the English translations he himself made of his stories in Oriya and thus came to the limelight of all concerned. His early writings are poems, a travelogue and some stories. Later he switched on only to stories and has by now earned a unique place for him in the galaxy of our short story writers. He has a style all his own, direct yet full of sarcastic nuances. His choice of words perfectly serves his style and his intention. By now he has several collections of his stories published both in Oriya and in English, published both in India and outside. At times it seems that he must have written some of his stories first in English and then translated them to Oriya. One of the story collections of Manoj Dās at his early phase is Āraṇyaka which deals with the blatant irrational in man. He has produced innumerable fables for children mainly in the English language and some of them are also available in Oriya. One of his short story collections has been named 'Fables and Fantasies for Adults.' It sometimes appears that most of Manoj Dās's stories read very appropriately as fables for adults. Starting with the irrational in man and then adding a few doses of cynicism of the benevolent type to his total attitude towards those for whom he writes, he seems to have ended up with looking at man as an adult who can be satisfied with fables. An enception in the ocean of stories Manoj has to his credit, is the

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one captioned 'Lakshmira Abhisāra' where there is the least of the salvationistic cynical element which is so typical with Manoj Dās. After everything has been said and delivered, it is not the cynicism of the salvationist that will save mankind, it may at best make man happily reconciled to his lot, in the meanwhile taking a sort of masochistic pleasure at his own misery and helplessness. Masochism is no remedy for man in the present predicament, even when it is being prescribed by good men in the form of well-knit fables and stories.

Kanhe'ilāl Dās died prematurely when he was budding out as a promising writer of short stories with a style all his own. He stood very near to life and hence was no cynic, neither a salvationist. He had courage, frankness and the honesty which enables a sensitive writer to explore into the seams of life and expose all its darkness to light. The stories Kanhe'i has written have been posthumously brought out by friends, which more than anything else speak out the sensitive soft heart he had within him and the keen all-inviting eyes with which he wanted to feel into things. Of the rest who have made a real dent in the realm of short-story writing are Rame'sh Chandra Dhaḷ and Rabi Pattanāyak. Rame'sh Chandra has a natural knack for creative writing, novels, short stories, poems, children's literature and what not. His best is definitely yet to be. Both Dhal and Pattanāyak are keenly aware of the intriguing social forces that conspire against the humanity of man all

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around him, the gullibilities of those in power. To bring these into the short stories does need a certain courage and honesty and such are very rarely seen among the writers of to-day. Those who do not know how to enlighten and eliven have a special inclination to entertain. Before we go over to drama, our next point in the discussion, we must mention Biśwaranjana, the obdurate adorer of all and sundry in life he comes across to choose as a theme for his writing. His stories are not officially stories, but belles-lettres, and his belles-letters are not officially belles-lettres, but personal stories in recollection. He reminds one of so much of Bamâcharaṇa Mitra who, we may presume must have inspried Biswaranjana when he lived. What is the most interesting about Biswaranjana is that he keeps on growing as he writes, in the width of his sensibilities, in the depth of his experiences and in the quality of his rapport with himself as a lover and a narrator of life. The path from his Kăchakadhe'i through Jibanachampū to Tathâpi Āloká is a long journey, and there are yet also miles to go.

DRAMA

These stories as a bulk are actually far away from the real story that life is. Life in this country is more interesting than the pile of stories that our story-writers write. The same may be said also about our dramas. These dramas, so wonderfully presented on the stage with the most modern innovativeness have so little to speak of the drama most of our people are compelled to live upon the other stage

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called the world. The more modern a drama is, the more it is removed from life and induces us to shun it. The characters who come and go on the stage and speak so brilliant a dialogue masterfully stuffed look like poodles of modernism and seldom have the heroic in them in spite of the engineer in drama who has structured them. Manoranjana Dās was writing dramas in the traditional style to start with and was himself evolving in his creative craftsmanship, when suddenly he came to realize as it were that what all he had been making was no good and took a decision in favour of the new style in drama. Almost contemporary to him was of course Prāṇabandhu Kar who has given us some of the finest dramas but who never changed uniforms to look modern. In the dramas that followed in the wake of Manoranjana's new switch over indicate that he recanted his own previous creations, almost disowned them and appeared in his second guise, with a calculated decision as it were. After that he wrote for the alienated few in the towns and almost discarded his old customers at the stage. Āgâmi marks the period of transition and then came Āraṇya Fasala, Banahansī, Amrūtasya Pūtra, Kāthaghoda, Śabdalipi, and Bitarkita Aparānha as sequels. Some of these travelled abroad to the cities, got translated and brought applauses though, but Manoranjan lost much of his ground and the creative urge in him ran berserk and expended itself in the jungles of intellectuality. That gave fortune to Manoranjan no doubt, but was a misfortune for the stage in Orissa.

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All along what Manoranjan wrote as dramas, he was out trading to festoon his dramapieces with a gallantry that the craze for decorativeness in the case of an artist gives him. He had that the buntings needed in order to prove with a certain pugnacity that, all that he was out vending in his bag were absurd dramas. He took the qualifying word rather literally and had not, it seems, exactly grasped what it had come to connote upon the European literary context. From the traditional straight to the sophisticated modern smacks more of unhealth than of anylting else. There should have been intermediary steps so that things could have been more healthy and made a real development from below possible. As parallel examples on the other hand, we have Byomakeśa Tripathi (1929) and Biswajit Das (1931) who are predominantly stage-oriented and take care of the meticulous details that make an appropriate stage on which the drama is played. In the dramas of Bijaya Kumāra Miśhra, there is always a message, a symbolic one that permeats deep into everything that is presented through the themes. Very near to him stands Ramesh Pāṇigrāhi (1943). Both of them seem to be growing along with their creations. They do incorporate new elements into what they want to present but have always a more stable and dependable base. The infrastructures subscribe very ably to the messages and thus the dramas appear to be successes and in any case never throw you headlong into a vacuum of the absurd. You feel both entertained and inlightened. In between the two extremes, we can locate Kartika Chandra Ratha (1942)

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and Ratnâkara Chaini who have their eyes on both and are more artistically conscious all the time. Kartika is always making admirable experiments at combining the best in the old as well as in the new and thus his dramas always give an impression of having both continuity and innovation in them. All over Orissa, even away from the hubs, there are developing small but keenly interested groups to provide alternatives. Sometimes these groups are socially more aware and suggest worthy hints for the further development of the stage in Orissa. The Srastā group of Balasore is a case in point.

CRITICISM AND ESSAYS

A society which most prizes all kinds of sentimental flatulence and where in the midst of a sickening hierarchy, flattery is the most readily available style, is no good ground for a critical attitude in literature, and without the proper critical attitude which wants to understand deeply and is never content with giving labels in a superficial sort of way, essays cannot thrive. The essay as a mode in creative writing looks at things as a whole, never wails, nor outright rejects; it tries to understand. It 'opens up' doors and raises further questions. It gives you a perspective and the needed eyes to be abbe to see wider and see into. In the context of the small horizons Orissa has been condemned to live with in many a respect, the writers of essays have shown a tendency to become sentimental and smug at the very first opportunity and thus lose their balance,

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Or, they have become prone to conceal the real truths under covers of a verbosity that very easily dupes and keeps you in complacency. Most of the writers of essays write them as grown-up and hardened school boys and often betray that they do not have any convictions of their own Thus the personal warmth and fervour always lack. The modern essay as a pattern has very easily extended itself into the belles-lettres style and in rhe latter, one can remember two writers who have given proofs of excellence. They are Nityânanda Mohāpātra and the late Bamâcharana Mitra Chandras'ekhara Ratha's belles-lettres read like skeptical essays, though the style is poetic and has always a romantic backlash. Bhubaneswar Behera has also his own individual mark in the field and even his stories create an illusiin of belles-lettres around them. Quite a major segment of the field under review has been taken by essays in literary criticism and histories of literature. The most familiar faces are the many teachers and still higher-ups in the colleges and universities who write to cater for their own students. They more often than not confine themselves to the class-room range and though competing with one another to woo the world of their student clientele as the first bidders, they seem to fiddle and potter at a very low key. The range of their tethers is also very much determined and cut to size by the publishers who live on their wares. Through this teamwork between the publisher and the teacher-writers, we have several collections of critical essays and also histories of literature. The few who have been able to transcend these limitations and

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inhibition have of course produced very worthy studies, but they would have been at their best defenitely without the inhibitions. Natabara Sāmantarāya (b 1918) has everyone's gratitudes for having gone into the piles of source materials like a white ant as it were and has brought at our disposal a haven of information stored in his books. These will very much supply grist for further creative research by others. Pandit Sūryānārāyana Dās who passed away recently has produced four volumes on the various periods of Oriya literature also providing us with an annal-like inventory very useful for a more deep probe. Nilakantha's attempt at providing us with the necessary links to grasp a continuity in Oriya literature was more prejudicial than illuminating. The outstanding two exceptions are of course Māyādhara Mānasingha and Surendra Mohānty.

Surendra's book on Fakiramohan (1948) is the first book in literary criticism with a modern emphasis. Now he has two volumes, rich in their analytical slants, one on the early and the other on the medieval phases of Oriya literature. He ought to have written in the same vein on the modern phase. Of late, he has brought out another study in one volume on the entire body of Oriya literature including the modern and making it near up-to-date His best in the way of a history of literature, one expects, his yet to arrive. Māyādhara Mānasingha wrote like a poet whatever he wrote, also when he *was* called upon to write a history of Oriya literature. He writes with a dash as it were, expressing in full colours his own prefereness and

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committals. One may agree with him or may not, but has to allow him his right to put forth his own point of view. Among the younger group, we can mention Dāsarathi Dās (b. 1936), Krūṣna Charaṇa Sāhū (b. 1930) and Nityānanda Satapathi (1941). All these have seriousness, a desire for depth and a willingness that makes them able to go where their researches will take them. Mention must be made of the German Research Group from the University of Heidelberg in West-Germany which was here in Orissa for quite some years and did some very valuable fundamental research on the history and cutture of Orissa, especially on the Jagannātha institution. Late Dr. (Miss) Anncharlotte Eschmann, the first remembered of them, went into hitherto unfathomed roots of the worship of Jagannātha as a cult. She did some probing studies on Mahimā Dharma also. Her studies and researches in Orissa seem to have very much prevailed upon her in somewhat shaping her basic attitudes toward the study of culture and religious tradition in general. Dr. Hermann Kulke of the same team was more interested in kings as flotsams of history. He has written a whole book of critical essays in the German language on Orissa's socio-political history and its bearings on the religious expressions. He co-authors another history of India in German which marks a departure in that it gives more space to Orissa in it than is usually the practice.

Science has also come to be a theme with some of the recent writers in Oriya prose. There are

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always many people who write on topics of science, but do not have a creative style while doing that. The most remembered in the field is the late Goloka Bihāri Dhal who has two books to his credit, one on the origin of language and the other on phonetics. Gokūḷānanda Mahāpātra is a pioneer in introducing science fiction to Oriya literature. He has produced many in the same category on the first man on the moon and the like, but his best attempt is perhaps Sūnāra Odisā where he in a wonderful story style, speaks of the natural potentials of Orissa and pleads that these have to be tapped and harnessed. Debakānta Mishra is the most prolific writer in this field and though a man of physics by vocation, he also spills into economics, semantics and futuristics while choosing his themes. Śarata Kūmāra Mohānty who teaches mathematics has brought out a well-written volume on the Plato-Sacratic tradition in philosophy, onother introductory on existentialism and a short life of Jean-Paul Sartre. His latest is a study on the great culture that Hellas (Greece) once was The initiative taken by all these writers has been instrumental in making possible several magazines in the Oriya language given entrirely to science and the implication it has for man and society in the foreseeable future.

Most of the science literature is written for children of course. But there is also always a special area in every literature called children's literature' meaning, precisely, literature written for children by

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adults. And most adults in our society have not been children themselves during their own childhood and will not give it any right of place on its own Thus most of the writers who write for children are writers with masks. India has all through the ages been a land of fables from where, it is boastfully claimed, they have migrated to differnt parts of the world. The adults tend to sermonize, falsely moralize and will always have their own impositions on the impressionable field of a child's mind. All this succeeds very much in preserving a continuity of the age-old cowardices. In the category of this old point of view we have Ūdayanāha Sadangi and a whole tribe trailing after him even to-day and they do constitute the vast majority of the writers for children in Orissa. Rāmakrūṣna Nanda is a bold departure because of his love for science and the world of nature. Goloka Bihāri Dhal has written some of the best biographies for children in an almost inimitable style that disarms all inhibition that they have while reading anything written for them by the Big Brotherly adults. Manoj Dās has written a good deal of fables for the adult in children. Rame'sh Chandra Dhal has also many children's stories to his credit and of late has attempted a novellette, first of its kind in Oriya, for children. Of the rest, they belong to the birds, kings, beasts and gods category and make an impression as if the writers of these tend to look upon the children as having claims to nothing more than that, they never look upon children as growing souls. All heads bend in veneration before Binode Kānungo who has started

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with his ambitious scheme of bringing out an encyclopaedia for children, the Jnānamandaḷa, in a complete set of 75 volumes, of which about thirty and odd have already come out. He has been virtually singlehanded in the endeavour. His smaller publications on a variety of subjects written for children present a style that is meant very appropriately for children. Manindra Mohanty , who has earned a doctor's degree by writing a thesis on children's literature in Oriya, is very sincerely at it. He organizes workshops and meets where all concerned including child psychologists confer to think more systematically on the various facets of the field and which serve a real purpose. There are plenty of children's magazines now coming in ever larger numbers in Oriya, indicating that it is a growing trade. The reason is of course that there is a larger enrolment in the schools thus increasing the number of the potential consumers.

THE OTHER FIELDS

Then we come to translations. Only through translation a literature can bring itself into contact with all other literatures of the world and be inspired by them to extend its own boundaries and depths. Translation from other literatures into Oriya is an essential need in that Oriya literature for many a reason has remained very local and insular. There have been several very commendable attempts at it, both by individuals and publishers. Lakshmi Nārāyaṇa Mohanty has given most of his creative zeal to

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translations only. He has of course confined himself to the areas of short stories and novels. Golaka Bihari Dhal has translated some of Premchand's novel's. Sri Aurobindo's major works, including The Life Divine are now available in Oriya translation. Here one must mention the name of Prafūlla Chandra Dās, a publisher from Cuttack who has been instrumental in getting many Nobel-laureates in literature translated into Oriya. His list is a long one and includes poetry and autobiographies also. The publications are products of great love and care. Moreover, Prafūlla Dās is the very first publisher to introduce a hard-cover beautiful get-up in Oriya publishing when he began his mission sometime in the fifties. The translations have shown that Oriya language is surely capable of expression in a very wide scope and refutes the prejudice nourished by some that it is not so. As far as books translated from other than English languages are concerned, they have been done from the English translations except of course a few exceptions. As more people in Orissa begin to learn the other world languages besides English, this handicap will also be won over.

The relationship with English language of many educated Indians has been an unfortunate one. The level at times appears to be almost infantile. English will remain the first foreign language for educated Indians for all time to come. But with some of them it has become a near obsession to think that it is even more important for them than their own language. These carry a virile sense of inferiority with them when they

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feel that they were not born with an English spoon in their mouth and have to suffer under a sense of lack because of that. There is now a good deal of Indian writing in English and some of the genuine protagonists of the practice say that having had their first education in a public school with English as the medium, the latter is the only language in which they can express themselves best. But how do you compare them with a tribe of writers, who will even go to the other end of the world to see themselves published in English ? How do you fix people who feel miserable because they have to write in the medium of a regional language, their own language notwithstanding, and have almost a neurotic's love for the English language ? When these people turn to be writers, and succeed in getting themselves published in English, they strut about with an air of superiority at home among those who have been condemned to write in the native medium only. In the contextual frame of society we live in, these also happen to be placed better in society. They earn better and walk taller and for the less fortunate ones, look like the *rajahs* and the *sahibs* in literature. They are then very enthusiastically emulated and it soon becomes a fashion with all and sundry to get oneself translated to English at the nearest shop if possible. The phenomena has been more damaging than otherwise at least in Orissa. Of late there have cropped up English quarterlies and monthlies in Orissa where you get Oriya writing puffed and baked into an English stuff. The basic motive is publicity and not sharing and it gives you often a certain feeling of arrogance in assuming that you have already

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had your tail blued and face lacquered while the others have not yet done that.

Oftentimes these people do their own translations themselves. To save time and to qualify by the straight cut, there may be some who write first in English, get their stuff published and then publish a translation of it in Oriya remembering to add in a foot-note that an English translation of it has already been brought out. That may give the people an extra score in the ad-world of course, but as far as the literature at home is concerned, the result is damaging. It helps create an unhappy rift, between those who have the peacock's feathers on their tails and the others who have only a local import and are registered as the less equals. More healthy would have been that somebody else read our real masters in writing, was moved by the reading and took a decision to translate them. The German translations of English works, to give an instance, are done not in England by the writers themselves or their promoters in the horse race, but in Germany by somebody else. What we see in India and in Orissa for that matter is unhealthy and oftentimes ridiculous. The labour is neither able to have the really best in the regional language translated into English nor does it add anything to the wealth of the language to which regional pieces are translated. There should be a certain decorum also in the world of literary intercommunications.

On the other hand it is unfortunate that there is so little communication between the regional languages in

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India. The writers in Orissa know so little about what is being done by their kind in a neighbouring language. It is a trait which speaks that we have not yet found out our real centres; it suggests a morbidity that again suggests how much off the roots many of us have been brought up to become. Very little has been translated from Telugu to Oriya and our scholars who are schooled to specialize in Oriya literature do not know anything about other Indian literatures, Telugu included. The comparatively more smart know more of English literature than what they know about Sanskrit and even other Indian literatures. Our universities have miserably failed in their duty in this respect Because the saints and the scholars in the medieval age travelled widely around India, they helped very much in the inter-regional communications. They did these travels as a part of their pilgrimage. Most of our modern writers do not have anything like that The comparatively more educated ones among the writers have a rope round their neck, a rope that keeps on strangulating them and makes them more and more insular and provincial. The rope at the other end is tied to a sort of infatuation for the West and for English. To know one another as closely as to genuinely feel the real bonds of the great tradition is the healthy intermediary step to know the still greater world. There has to be done very much in Oriya literature to bring it into an intimate acquaintance with the rest of India. This is the real challenge of the emotional integration that is now so much talked of on the platforms,

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Journalism in Orissa has a name that will be celebrated for all generations to come. It has been haloed, in the days of its beginning, by the names of persons of great vision and heart, Pyārimohan Āchārya, Gourishankara Roy, Fakiramohana Se'nāpati and Gopabandhu Dās. These were brave path-finders, had a mission much wider than their small individual selves, and they were anything but small people. The same vein went up to almost the attainment of political freedom, after which a lot of cowardice and smallness crept in. The heroes in journalfsm had each their private axes to grind and represented various brands of conformity. As more and more of the areas of our national life came to be directly or indirectly governed and determined by state power, journalism also tended to be more and more conformistic, both politically and professionally conformistic. One is reminded of the Ūtkala Pūtra and the Ūtkala Dipikā which did so much for the march of literature in Orissa during its initial days Gopabandhū Dāsa's Samāja serves as a guide to know how standard Oriya has developed step by step to become what it is to-day. Gopabandhu's editorials in the Samāja along the years are gems in Oriya prose and Oriya literature, if literature is taken as one intimately involved in life and in people. Those specimens of journalism are now conspicuous by their absence only. Welfare state in a poor country has always a temptation to become an absolute pace-setter and a prescriber of models and the boundary lines. Journalism in Orissa has become a victim of this element in India's social development and has become

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in most cases a forum for personal aggrandizements and glorification, but all the time remaining demeaningly conservative and conformist in its loyalties, little aware of the real challenges that face the society at large and also unable to sense the winds of change that is fast coming upon it to take it off to a new alignment of forces. In a society where so much has to be done on the side of man and against the moulds of the old patterns that so much stand in the way of genuine change, journalism has to be heroic, ready to stand the storms and go through untarnished, always on the side of man, justice and dignity. Lately there have been favourable reactions in this respect and there are single instances in Orissa where journalism has been taken as almost a mission, ready to be placated as nonconformist in order to stand erect and weather the consequences. While the most of the available journalism in the market tends to make of its readers a certain brand of clever cynics given to inactivity, nonconformist journalism attempts in its own way to bring back to our people a sense of dignity and above all a faith that things will change and that too with them as the willing participants in that process of change.

Humour has been defined as the total feeling which comes out of that ability to see and imbibe totally. It is also the ability to look at oneself, to laugh at oneself and laugh at the world which could be more sensible in order that it could detect the fake and the gloss in you. To be able to produce real humour, one must have assimilated a good deal of suffering

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oneself, must have identified oneself with yet more of that in the larger world. When humour acts as a compensation and a mask for one's own sufferings, then it tends to become more often than not an exhibitionistic imposition. It does make you have a hearty laugh, at times even a sadistic one; yet without bringing forth an experience of real humour. The doyen of humour in Oriya literature is of course Fakira Mohana S'enāpati, preceded only by Brajanātha Badaje'na, but when we come to the present times, it is Kāntakabi Lakshmikānta who towers over all. The near-invectives used by Fakiramohana in his autobiography to emphasize how he was not properly cared for by his own people toward the end leg of his life at times suggests that the humour he so much gives a proof of in the characters of his novels had not perhaps come as far as the interior web of his own life. Fakiramohana's poems also are so much without humour and at times even aridly personal. Kāntakabi Lakshmikānta on the other hand had lived with physical suffering all through his days, he had so much to complain about to destiny for what it had made of him. But Lakshmikānta never complained, never felt jealously deprived. Even his songs of adoration at the very feet of God are not of the complaining attitude, very much in contrast with the legion of our traditional bhajans which are negativistic and almost obnoxiously of a self-projecting vein. Lakshmikānta's heart was one always full of sympathy and he had almost forgotten his own suffering in the face of the mountains of suffering that he found was the world's lot. He had that healthy variety of

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humour which is the outcome of having realized how in front of the suffering of the world, your own suffering pales into insignificance.

Faturānanda (b. 1915) is the only name in Orissa as a writer who has made humour the sole lever of his writings. There is very much of the Kāntakabi in Fatūrananda, of course added and embellished with the up-to-date metaphors. The latter also bites with his humour, which then reduces itstlf to blunt satire. Chowdhūry He'makānta Mishra (b. 1930) is also equally noted for his humourful writings, mainly stories and sketches. He'makānta is a psychologist and an educationist in professional life; thus his slants are more permanent than those of Fatūrānanda. At the same time also, that gives a shine of sophistication to the pieces he writes, thus giving an impression that he has a definite message to be thrust down into your throat through the humour he uses as his instrument. Kūḷamani Mahâpātra (b. 1926) also has contributed very valuably to this field in Oriya literature. He seems to be the most sincere in his efforts and in the structure of his writings. It is another kind of humour, humour so called, which makes you burst into laugh as you are told how small the others have behaved and been, but which ends there only and does not have any feeling tones to carry with you. Godābaris'a Māhâpātra's Niankhūntâ once served a humour of this kind. It laughed at the bad men and conspired to suggest that the better-placed were in fact no better than the average run of people like any one of us in the crowd. It never inspired the best in the man who enjoyed the

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caricatures, and what was worse, it did not have that elevation where one could laugh at oneself. There are now several other specimens being brought out. They create quite a sensation as you read them Then you forget them till the next issue arrives next week to serve you with more of them. Real humour does much more than merely entertaining, it makes you look within yourself, calm down a lot and begins to persuade you to be convinced that for the real things to be realized, one has to go deeper, be honest to oneself and honest to one another.

The foregoing survey of names has been more names and very much less a real survey. A survey should be able to indicate the underlying trends, and in Oriya literature at present one really comes across very little which can be deciphered as a trend. The very first impression one gets after having entered the crowd of writers who write in Oriya to-day is one of quantity where so many write and compete with one anther to pass as more equal among the equals. What most of them are in real life and what they write as literature have almost nothing in common between them. Success seems to be the dominating tone in both the roles they play. Literature as a hobby and literature as an interesting profession ought to be different from literature with a commitment. Even commitment to literature as just literature has a certain sanctity of its own which does not fit in very well with a style of life where the whole weight is laid on success. The socitey of which our writers

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are also creatures as any other person has for many a reason chosen success as the highest value and most of our writers only subscribe to that. Coping with a society that you know is sick has nothing to do with the modern temper. Thus, most of our writers in Oriya, whether in poetry or in prose, remain very much oldish in their allegiances in life, incapable of a faith that things could change and be otherwise. The only modernity with them is the so-called modernity in form, and expending one's whole store of innovative zeal on form only suggests a callousness which again suggests that there must be something very much broken within them, so broken that they are afraid to look beyond and look for a different sort of a morrow They sing painfully on only what is.

In spite of the earnestness with which these modern writers sing and write, there is nevertheless no glory and it is in no way honourable to speak and sing in a sort of ornamental derision about the sty in which you, yourself happen to be a pig. To sing how dismal everything has become with the latest and the most ingeniously manufactured metaphors and images still leaves you where you are and betrays the truth that you are afraid and therefore clever and hence want to stand away from the fray where the future things are taking shape. To sing with all kinds of ornamentation that the bridges are falling and the towers are burning and finish up all your revelry with only that may be a tendency for masochism, and masochism in literature has very little of the modern temper in it, though the

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stalwarts proclaim it to be otherwise. In Oriya literature, as in any other regional literature in India, there is almost no continuity between what literature was before freedom and what it has come to be and mean after freedom Our leaders have failed us no doubt, in politics, in the field of education and in keeping alive a faith in the country that genuine man is capable of many achievements and fulfilments. But that literature should suffer a frustration because of that was in no way inevitable. Literature could have spoken of an alternative. In stead of becoming a singer and a celebrator of decadence and deriving a tacit pleasure from it, it could have become a literature of protest. In stead of singing and speaking ceremoniously of the snow and the murk, it could have spoken and sung of the seed beneath the snow.

The challenge has remained open even now And one can see solitary voices or small solitary groups beginning to speak in a different tone. Trying to bring down a paradise with the help of the experiments with form has, it seems, come to a saturation point and there are already dissenting notes. The very young in Oriya literature refuse to follow the false heroes who have been writing with so much of a righteous ostentation during the last two decades and have so arbitrarily dominated the literary scenes. Till now, the hero was the very successful person in society, the happy and the secure as far as living in a sick and very insecure society was concerned, who nevertheless so beautifully spoke and chanted in fashionable quartettes

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about the utter meaninglessness of life, very much resembling the blessed scholars at a king's court of yore who dabbled in delighting themselves and the court by philosophical discussions about the total illusoriness of life. The hero till now was the clever yet humble elder in literature who flattered himself into the traps of the rich, became a sycophant in the process and dreamt the same antiquated dreams of bringing abundance to literature by currying favour with the opulent and the wealthy. The hero was till now the regional chauvinist with his petty prides about a past that he wanted to use as a compensation for the deprivations of the present. And last but not the least, the hero up till now was the teacher in the university stuck deep into a mediocrity who had anything but a critical attitude in literature, who was so much satisfied with so little and always went out to block all possible horizons with his sham models. The new voices of departure are fast beginning to spell themselves out and there are already clear signs of it

These voices, it is interesting to note, are being most pronouncedly heard in Oriya literature in the field of poetry and of criticism Books of poems are being brought out in profusion where the new arrivals ii tend to bear upon all concerned that they have something different to say and also that it is foolish to claim, as some of the poets in the modein establishment do claim, that the acme has already been reached. Small groups are being formed all over Orissa, where young hearts, heavy with that passion for a new awareness and a new

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tone in poetry come together. They are more dedicated to poetry and to that awareness in contrast to those of the decadent decades when the most celebrated and the most outspoken were primarily dedicated to themselves and sang of the decadence almost with a priestlike impunity. A case in point is the 'Satirtha' group that has just brought out its first collection of poems. The poems indicate a seeking and suggest so much that the poets are seeking with a faith which motivates them in the seeking. The new critics are critically aware. They believe that criticism in literature has to be much more than students' manuals and guides to pass examinations. They are beginning to adapt themselves to the new fact that literature is not a special pursuit and thus cannot be cultivated away from life, that it is very much a part of life and of society. And what is more, it has not only to interpret and explain life and society as they are, it has to probe deeper to find out why they are what they are and upon that context, to suggest new directions and impetuses. This new criticism will not simply destroy; it will also fulfil and provide us with the next insights. Oriya literary criticism has remained very local, very much oversure about its small finds and this has kept it somewhat closed, complacent and arrogant. The new criticism with its promises will strive to look at Oriya literature as part of a larger whole, that is the great tradition of India. It will also not lose sight of the lines where Indian literature merges further into the total bulk of world literature with its challenges and their significances also at the local levels.

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In whatever way we may approach the theme of Oriya literature to-day, there will be a unanimity in saying that there has been a rift between literature and the society during the decades after freedom and the rift has been progressively increasing. This rift can be compared with the one which happened during the three centuries in the middle ages when literature had become court literature and was meant for special consumption. The alienatirn of the modern educated intellectual has resulted in the alienation of the writer from society and his writings have meant a running away from society. Literature has to be committed to society. In any case it is much more sane to be committed to society than to be committed to alienation. Alienation denies the very soil upon which you have to stand and gives you a hundred excuses for having run away. The writer who is alienated behaves like the prodigal son who never takes up a challenge and yet wants to have all the loaves and fishes available for him. An alienated person, including the alienated poet and writer, ceases to grow. Most of the writers and poets of Oriya literature to-day do not grow and at times it appears that they also refuse to grow. They seem to walk on a plateau, a table where the elevation tends to remain the same. They seem to be moving in a cricle. Becauae they refuse to dare and to grow up, they get themcselves so viciously absorbed in the affair of a style and a technique so that they can feed themselves with an illusion that they are thus attaining new highs. But on the other side, they are so much given to fabricating a style and busy with the blandishments

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needed that they are incapable of growing, and what is more, of loving. Loving is not possessing and for most of our writers, writing is an art to be possessed. Loving is essentially giving, giving th best in oneself by opening up the innermost gates. Our writers of to-day conceal their real stuff under cover of the brilliant techniques and the latest borrowings.

However modern may be the techniques and the styles used in our poems and dramas and what not, Oriya literature is leagues off from acquiring that modern sensibility which has people as its very first theme of concern, Modernity is only an irony in a society where three fourths of the people live reconciled to darkness and to indignity. Our society must be able to come out of its feudalistic isolations and arrogances and then only we shall have the appropriate base to take the next step. A society where most people live condemned at a subhuman level, unaware of the destiny that might be theirs on the one hand and where the most modern wares are exhibited in the literary quarters by our writers on the other can not be anything but an example of primitivity and inhumanity. Only the very privileged in these circumstances have an access to what is called literature; and those who choose to be writers in a society as this, can be deemed to be even more privileged. This writer for the sake of sanity only has to be a committed writer, committed to people and committted to a better future, committed against all the filth and the flatulences of to-day, committed against cruelty and indifference to man. There was

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something of this sensibility in Oriya literature in the years when the country was going through its struggle for political freedom, and after the latter has been obtained, some people have as it were gone to sleep over that attainment pretending that there are no other freedoms to be fought and won. It is unfortunate that most of our writers are those who are thus sleeping, complacent, content and cajoling themselves all the time to believe that literature is for the enjoyment and entertainment of the chosen and ought not to kill its own mirth by giving its head to any other thing. These have been our managers in literature; they are the uncommitted and one can find them in the universities, in the establishments and in the debrises looking for the outdated techniques. These - managers are dead, dead to the real challenges that confront man in society. The dead have their own islands with the special flourish they command around them and possess all the goods to pass as cultured. These dead have to bury their dead. And then only they can serve our literature in a real way by being on the side of man. There appears to bo no other way out.

Or they will be surpassed. The backslide which they have been so much instrumental in causing will be surpassed. The dead will be surpassed by the living; the real greens who will refuse to become yellow. Seen upon this context, Oriya literature seems so much to be passing through a period of transition and the pangs associated with all such periods. The stalemate that has been the result of the decadence since about a decade

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after freedom came is being challenged now. The accepted stereotypes are being challenged. The very honesty of some of the most celebrated writers is being put to question. The very frames of reference are being challenged: Is literature a superstructure which has little to do with the life obtained in the society at the time or has it a commitment? Are the writers simply to interpret society in a stylistic sort of way or have they to suggest directions, new wholes and new alternatives also? Does a writer's writings speak also of himself or we shall think of him standing apart and living his ordinary life when, suddenly as it were, some other daemonic force gets the better in him and drives him to write and to create? These are the basic questions being asked to-day. Should we think of the writer as sort of a split personality who has his major part so much in the world which gives him success, lucre and earthly fulfilment, and another part, an appendage as it were, which dreams, creates and wanders in the pastures of literary imagination? this is the crux of the problem. Literature, to be adequate as a response to the challenges of life individual and collective, has to be as extensive as life is and as exhaustive as the human aspirations have been destined t be. Literature to deal with man as a whole has to take care of him as a whole, and man, on his part, in order that he may deal with literature as a whole, cannot have one code for literture and another code for the rest of the segments of his life.

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Poet Browning says somewhere that out of three sounds, the poet makes not a fourth thing, but a star. We may here take the liberty of extending the meaning of the word 'poet' not to exclusively' mean one who writes only poems but to mean the writer in general. Not all writers in Oriya have been able to make a star out of the words. All of them have not been equally faithful to the words they have used. All of them have not been honest to themselves and to their commitment. Quite a lot of them, boldly starting with words, have ended also with words only. Some of them have been very unheroic and sham. But nevertheless the pageant has continued, at times taking very long strides and at other times withdrawing as it were to a backwater. Many a time, there have been pioneers who have appeared as it were with a mission and as worthy leaders, have taken the whole milieu with a storm. Not all people become writers. Yet there are always some, both born and made, who cannot do anything but write. They feel they have something to say and they serve their time through what they write Some of them shake even the very foundations of their contemporary society by what they write. The writers have been the most sensitive of people in any society, have said the most intimate things. Some of them have protested when eveyone else had decided to tacitly acquiesce. Oriya language and Oriya literature has many reasons to be grateful to its writers. That gratitude will never be expressed enough.

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APPENDIX

Oriya literature and its Makers
A Quick Glance

[With some of. their notable works]

Ca. 8th. Century to 12th Century :

The writers of the Charypadas, some of whom were definitely from the tract of land now comprising Orissa.
Oriya Nātha literature
The Bratakathās

Ca. 13th. and 14th Century

Bachhā Dāsa [Kaḷasā Chaūtis'ā]
Mārkanda Dāsa [Kesaba Koili]
Nārāyaṇa Abadhūta Swāmi [Rūdrasūdhānidhi]

15th. Century

Sāraḷā Dāsa [Mahābhārata, Bilankā Rāmāyaṇa, Chandi Pūrāṇa]

16th. 17th. Century

Baḷarāma Dāsa [Jagamohana Rāmāyana, Bhāba Samūdra, Brahmānda Bhugoḷa]
Jagannātha Dāsa [Bhāgabata, Artha Koili, Tūḷābhinā, Dārūbrahma Gitā]
Achyutānanda Dāsa [Gūrūbhakti Gitā, Tattwabodhini, Sunya Samhita, Brahmas'ānkūḷi, Aṇākāra Samhitā,]

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Jasobanta Dāsa [Sibaswarodaya,
Premabhakti Brahmagitā]

Śisū Ananta Dāsa [Hetū Udaya Bhāgabata]

Arjūna Dāsa [Rāma Bibhā, Kaḷpalatā]

De'badūllabha Dāsa [Rahasya Manjari]

Pratāpa Rāya [Śasi Seṇa]

Danāi Dāsa [Gopibhāsa]

Śis'ū Śankara Dāsa [Uṣābhiḷāsa]

Narasimgha Seṇa [Parimaḷā]

Kārtika Dāsa [Rūkmiṇi Bibhā]

Bisnu Dāsa [Premalochana]

Chaitanya Dāsa [Nirgūna Māhātmya,
Bisṇūgarbha Purāṇa]

Bhūpati Pandita [Prema Panchāmrūta]

Dhananjaya Bhanja [Tripūramohini, Icchābati,
Madanamanjari, Anangarekhā]

18th. Century

Dinakrūsna Dāsa [Rasakalloḷa, Artatrāṇa
Chaūtis'ā]

Bhakta Charana Dāsa [Mathūra Mangaḷa]

Ūp'endra Bhanja [Baidehisa Biḷāṣa,
Lābanyabati, Kotibrahmānda-
sūndari, Abanā Rạsataranga,
Chhānda Bhūsana,
Chitrakābya Bandhodaya,
Rạsapanchakạ]

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Lokanātha Bidyadhara [Brūndābana Bihara, Chitrakaḷa, Sarbangasūndari, Rasakaḷa, Niḷadrimahodaya]

Sadānanda Kābisūrya Brahma [Pr'ematarangiri, Jūgaḷarasamrūtalahari, Pre'makalpalata]

Abhimanyū Samantasimhara [Bidagdhachintamani, Sūlakshana, Pre'makaḷa, Premachintamani,]

Brajanatha Badajena (1730-1795) [Ambikabiḷasa, Chatūra Binoda, Samarataranga, Gundicha Bije]

Arakshita Dasa (b. 1772) [Mahimandaḷa Gita]

19th. Century (The First Half)

Jadūmani (1781-1866) [Prabandha Pūrnachandra, Raghababiḷasa]

Ramachandra Pattanayaka [Harabati]

Banamaḷi

Kabisurya Baḷadeba Ratha (1789-1845) [Kishora Chandrananda Champu]

Gopaḷakrusna (1785-1862)

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19th Century (The Second Half)

Bhima Bhoi [Stūtichintamani, Brahmanirūpana Gita, and the numerous bhajans]

Pyarimohana Ācharya [Odisa Itihasa]

Radhanathā Raya (1848-1908)
[Chilika, Chandrabhaga, Mahajatra, Darabara]

Madhūsūdana Rao (1853-1912)

Fakiramohana Senapati (1847-1918)
[Abasara Basare, Ūtkaļa Bhramanam. Ātmajibanacharita. Chha Mana Āthaguntha, Lachhama]

20th. Century (1900-1947)

Gangadhara Meher (1862-1924)
[Tapaswini, Pranayaballari, Arghyathaļi, Ūtkaļa Lakshmi]

Nandakishora Baļa (1875-1928)
[Nirjharini, Pallichitra, Kanakalata]

Gopaļachandra Praharaja (1872-1945)
[Bai Mahanti Panji, Bhagabata Tūngire Sandhya, Pūrnachandra Bhaṣakośa]

Baiṣnaba Pani (1882-1956)

Gopabandhū Dasa (1877-1928)
[Bandira Ātmakatha, Karakabita]

Nīļakantha Dasa (1884-1967)
[Konarke, Āryajibana, Odia Sahityara Kramaparinama]

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Godabarisa Misra (1886-1956)

[Purūsottama Deba, Mūkūnda Deba, Ālekhika]

Lakshmikanta Mahapatra (1888-1953)

[Jibana Sangita, Kanamamū]

Lakshminarayana Sahu (1890-1966)

[Mo Barabula Kahani]

Godabarisa Mahapatra (1898-1965)

[Kanta O Phūla, Banka O Sidha Ebe Madhya Banchichhi]

Kūntaḷa Kumari (1900-1938)

[Archana, Ūchchhwasa, Ahwana, Bhranti, Parasamani]

Birakishora Dasa (1898-1973)

Harekrusna Mahataba [Palasi Abasane, Pratibha, Odisara Itihasa]

Kaḷindi Charana Panigrahi (b. 1901)

[Matira Maniṣa, Mūktagadara Kshūdha Chhūritiē Loda]

Baikunthanatha Pattanayaka (1904-1979)

[Ūttarayana, Kabyasamchayana, Mrūttikā Darsana]

Mayadhara Manasingha (1905-1973)

[Dhūpa, Hemasasya, Kamaḷayana, Odia Sahityara Itihasa]

Radhamohana Godanayaka (b. 1911)

[Ūtkaḷika, Kabyanayika, Pasūpakshira Kabya, Sūrya O Andhakara]

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Kaḷicharana Pattanayaka (1898-1980)
[Bhāta, Kūmbhārachaka]
Ārtaballabha Mohanti
Anantaprasada Panda (b. 1906)
Kamalakanta Dash (1906-1982)
Rajakishora Pattanayak (b. 1912)
Kanhu Charana Mohanty (b. 1906)
[Śāsti, Ha' Anna, Bajrabahū]
Gopinatha Mohanti (b. 1914)
[Parajā, Amrūtara Santāna, Dadibūdhā,
Mātimatāḷa]

20th. Century (1947—)

Sachchi Routoṛy (b. 1913)
[Pandūlipi, Chitragriba, Baji Rāūta,
Kabitā-1962]
Krūsnachandra Tripāthi (b. 1911)
Ūpendra Tripathi
Ananta Pattanayaka (b. 1913)
Natabara Samantaraya
Pandita Sūryanārayana Dāsa
Fatūrānanda (b. 1915) [Nākatā Chitra Kara]
Goloka Bihari Dhaḷa
Binoda Kanūngo
Nityananda Mahapatra (b. 1912)
[Pānchajanya, Patra O Pratima,
Hidamati, Bhangahada]

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Basanta Kūmar Śatapathi (b. 1915)

Bhūbaneswara Behera

Bāmacharana Mitra (1915-1976)

[Bata Mahapūrūṣa, Enūscha, Tenūscha]

Kūnjabihari Dāsh (b. 1914)

[Palligiti Samchayana, Lokagaḷpa Samchayana]

Sūrendra Mahanti (b. 1922—) [Andhadiganta, Śātabdira Sūrya, Nıḷa Śaiḷa, Odiā Sāhityara Ādiparba/Madhyaparba Kulabrudha, Nḷiādri Bijaya

Gūruprasada Mohanti (b. 1924)

[Samūdrasnana]

Kishori Charana Dasa (b. 1924)

[Bhanga Khelana, Thakūraghara]

Akhila Mohana Pattanāyaka (b. 1927)

Mahapatra Nıḷamani Sahū (1927-1982)

Gobinda Dasa [Amabasyara Chandra Dese Deṣe]

Basantakūmari Pattanayaka (b. 1927)

[Amada Bata, Chora Bali]

Bidyūtprabhā Debi (1929-1277)

[Swapnadipa, Mati Pani Pabana]

Rabi Sinha (b. 1932)

[Apriya Kabita, Nihsanga Padatika]

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Manoranjana Dasa
[Baksi Jagabandhū, Katha Ghoda, Bitarkita Aparanha]
Chowdhuri He'makanta Mis'ra (b. 1930)
Chandrasekhara Ratha
[Jantrarudha, Asūrya Ūpanibesa]
Śantanu Kūmara Ācharya (b. 1935)
[Śatabdira Nachiketa, Narakinnara, Śakūntaḷa]
Krūṣnaprasada Misra (b. 1933)
[Aranya O Ūpabana]
Manoj Das (b. 1934)
[Lakshmira Abhisara, Dūradūrantara, Katha O Kahani, Dhūmrabha Diganta]
Ramakanta Ratha (b. 1934)
[Aneka Kothari, Sandigdha Mrugaya, Saptama Rūtū]
Śrinibasa Ūdgata (b. 1935)
Āpaṇara Gita, Pratima Apratima, Chaitraratha]
Brajanatha Ratha (b. 1936)
[Sabhyatara Mūnha]
Sitakanta Mahapatra (b. 1937)
[Aṣtapadi, Śabdara Ākas'a, Ane'ka Śarata]
Ramesh Chandra Dhala
[Andhakarara Sima, Aka ara Munha, Hira Nagarira Kāhani]
Kanheilal **D**asa

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